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ANOTHER DAY, ANOTHER $3,000
Executive Rip-Off in Corporate America
Paul Blumberg

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Carter Economics: Mixture As Before
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On Religion and Socialism
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The Sow That Eats Her Own Farrow
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The Problem of Pornography: A Discussion
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Robert Lekachman

Carter Economics: The Mixture as Before

Particularly at a time of slow growth and global economic disarray, a new president's first budget assumes even greater importance than usual as a statement of priorities and a forecast of policy for the remainder of his term. As commentators from the *Wall Street Journal* leftward to the *New Republic* have noted, Jimmy Carter's $500 billion Budget for the fiscal year 1979 differs remarkably little from the document that Jerry Ford might have prepared if that *Daily News* headline writer had been less inspired or more black voters had stayed home in 1976. There is no money for welfare reform or a start on national health insurance, nor any provision for additional public jobs and implementation of Humphrey-Hawkins full-employment pledges, even though a severely modified version of that measure finally won White House endorsement. And although a new urban initiative is promised, the Budget seeks no dollars to support it.

As fewer of the Administration's critics have pointed out, Carter's initial budget is very much in the mainstream of moderate Keynesian prescription for faster economic expansion. As in 1963 and 1964, tax reduction is the therapy of choice. Smaller imposts on corporate profits and liberalization of exisiting investment-tax credits are designed in the 1970s as in the 1960s to encourage construction of new factories and office buildings and installation of new machinery to fill them. If all proceeds according to plan, parallel reductions in personal income taxes will encourage consumers to buy more cars, appliances, recreational equipment, and clothing.

This emphasis upon the stimulation of aggregate demand at a time of severe structural strain between regions, and among young, old, black, white, male, and female workers, signals among other things the bankruptcy of mainstream economics. Unwilling to accept the glaring need for coherent, national economic planning or even the more limited interventions into "free" market allocations of resources and incomes implied by selective controls over key prices and collective-bargaining settlements, respectable economists, like squirrels in a cage, agitatedly race in circles, alternately yapping "inflation" and "unemployment."

For want of better notions, economists address new problems with old techniques. Tax reduction in the 1960s was reasonably effective because rapid economic growth in this country and other advanced, industrial societies was still possible. Energy and other raw materials were cheap. OPEC was in the future. The long post-World War II boom still had nearly a decade to run. Thus, until Vietnam destroyed the hopes stimulated by LBJ's Great Society, it really was possible simultaneously to soothe Middle America with lower taxes and fund a variety of social programs. The politics of growth are comparatively benign. Distribution of annual surpluses allows for the indulgence of altruism for the poor and unfortunate, at least if they are properly grateful.

The impact of tax reduction is quite different once present and prospective growth rates diminish. Then tax cuts become either/or rather than both/and propositions. Since not even

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Administration economists anticipate rapid growth in the remainder of this decade, Carter's $26 billion tax cut (Congress is likely to increase the figure) wipes out funding prospects for new social and urban initiatives right up to the 1980 election. Whatever the White House may say, this tax cut puts an end to welfare reform, health progress, and any but cosmetic attention to the chronic problems of the Northeast and the Midwest. Carter's 45 minutes in the South Bronx are likely to conclude White House attention to its continued decay.

The most that can be expected of the tax-cut strategy is a 12- or 15-month extension of the present mild and aging recovery from the 1973-75 minidepression. Unemployment will at best continue to fluctuate between 6 and 7 percent overall, and the usual monthly regrets will be extended to women and to black teenagers. Unless civil disorders on the scale of the late 1960s recur, it appears depressingly safe to say that Congress will cheerfully concur in the President's new minimalism. They cheered the passages in his State of the Union address that asserted with an air of discovery that "government cannot solve problems," "set our goals," "define our vision," "eliminate poverty," "reduce inflation," or "provide energy." Apparently the only thing government *can* do is reduce taxes on incomes and profits. No wonder Howard Baker applauded: "He's singing our song . . . a Republican song."

I COME FINALLY to a still more depressing phenomenon. As DuPont's Irving Shapiro, General Motor's Thomas Murphy, AT & T's John deButts, General Electric's Reginald Jones, and other pontiffs of the Business Roundtable troop in and out of the White House, the President and Congress are quietly dismantling the mildly progressive structure of income taxes, replacing it with heavier and heavier regressive payroll taxes to finance Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid. Last session Congress "rescued" the Social Security trust funds by sharply increasing rates and enlarging the earned income base upon which they are imposed. Next year a man or woman who earns $10,00 will pay $613 in Social Security taxes, far more than average personal income-tax liabilities in that bracket. Each year rates are to rise.

For three reasons at least, payroll taxes are among the worst and least fair ways of financing government. Since the 1978 ceiling on income subject to Social Security assessment is $17,000 the higher the income above that figures the lower the effective tax rate. An executive with a salary of $170,000 will pay precisely the same sum as a moderate earner of $17,000, or one-tenth the *rate* to which his less affluent neighbor is subject. Just to make matters worse, income from interest, dividends, rent, and royalities is exempt from Social Security taxes. By and large it is the rich not the poor who enjoy this loophole. Finally, this is a tax that covertly curtails real wages. Experts agree that the matching employer contribution is passed on either to customers in the shape of higher prices or to employees via smaller wage and fringe improvements. One practical effect of increased dependence on payroll taxes is to increase working-class opposition to enlargement of existing social programs or introduction of new ones. At best such programs in the new reactionary tax climate redistribute income within the ranks of low- and moderate-income families. □

Harrell Rodgers

Welfare Policies for the Rich

Despite rhetoric about free enterprise, big business has long sought government aid to protect it from the rigors of the market, insure large profits, and allow it to escape taxes on profits and wealth.

Apologists for capitalism often hold welfare programs for the poor to be illegitimate; failure to prosper is traced to personal deficiencies. Being "illegitimate," welfare for the poor is generally meager (to avoid rewarding sin), is clearly labeled as welfare (to make people feel badly about accepting it), is as much as possible in the form of services rather than cash (because the poor cannot be trusted with money), and generally includes intervention into the lives of the poor (because the poor must be regulated). Welfare for the nonpoor, on the other hand, requires ideological backpedaling and must therefore be camouflaged.

Camouflaging this welfare is not all that difficult. Businesses are not given welfare, they are

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given subsidies (a larger check to fewer persons). Businesses are not put on the food-stamp rolls, they are given low-cost loans, cost-overrun contracts, exemptions from antitrust laws, and tax credits and exemptions.

The tax code is one of the best devices for hiding welfare for the nonpoor. Through the tax deduction and exemption system billions can be pumped into the pockets of the nonpoor, and hardly anyone notices it. Since 1974 many of these tax exemptions and deductions have been reported in a special budget labeled "Tax Expenditures." Included in this budget are deductions for interest and taxes paid on home mortgages, interest on life insurance, charitable contributions, common credit costs, the lower tax rate for capital gains, the investment tax credit, and dozens of other items. But not all the more lucrative deductions are included in the tax-expenditure budget. Excluded are such deductions as business expenses, gifts and bequests received, foreign tax credits, earnings of foreign corporations, personal exemptions, and the progressive tax rate.[1]

The Congressional Budget Act of 1974 defined tax expenditures as "revenue losses attributable to provisions of the federal tax laws which allow a special exclusion, exemption, or deduction from gross income or which provide a special credit, a preferential rate of tax, or a deferral of tax liability."[2] The label "Tax Expenditures" gives official recognition to the fact that many tax deductions constitute official policy decisions to provide aid to certain groups. In 1976 tax expenditure cost the nation $91.8 billion.[3] *This represents the largest welfare program administered by the federal government.*

There is a basic logic to an aid program such as tax expenditures. If the government wants to aid some group or segment of the economy it seems reasonable, and less expensive, to reduce the group's tax rate rather than to tax them and then return part of the money in the form of a cash grant.

In practice, however, this logic flounders. There are three major problems with the tax expenditure program.

First, by not collecting a tax, the benefit that goes to particular groups is difficult to detect. While the government may be forgoing billions of dollars to help individuals, groups, or industries, the illusion is created that only those groups that actually receive cash payments or direct services are being benefited. But by any standard applied, tax expenditures exceed tax payments such as welfare by three or four times. When cuts in the budget are needed, it is always the highly visible, and therefore controversial but less costly tax payments that are the focus of attention.

Second, the benefits of tax expenditures are not equally applied across income segments. The low visibility of tax expenditures covers up this fact and allows gross inequities year after year. The basic problem is that to enjoy a tax break one has to have a good income. This automatically leaves out a large segment of the population. Additionally, and quite inequitably, tax expenditure breaks increase in monetary value with income. For example, the deduction for mortgage interest and taxes is a tax expenditure. The deduction is designed to provide federal aid to citizens to help them purchase homes. But the deduction aids the wealthy a great deal more than it aids middle-income citizens, and it does not help those too poor to own a house at all. For example:[4]

- If in 1977 a taxpayer earned in excess of $200,000, his/her deduction would result in a tax savings of 70¢ for every dollar spent for mortgage interest and taxes.
- If in the same year a taxpayer earned $10,000, his/her deduction would result in a tax savings of 19¢ for each dollar spent for mortgage interest and taxes.

The tax expenditure program, then, would pay 70 percent of the mortgage interest and taxes for the rich, 19 percent for the lower middle-income taxpayer, and nothing for the poor.

In 1976 the tax expenditure for housing cost $11.3 billion and, as in previous years, represented the largest housing assistance program in America; but since it does not show up in the regular budget, few appreciate this fact, and 75 percent of the benefits went to those in the upper half of the income distribution, with the top 1 percent

[1]There are three excellent works on this topic: Philip Stern, *The Rape of the Taxpayer* (New York: Vintage Books, 1974); George F. Break and Joseph A. Peckman, *Federal Tax Reform: The Impossible Dream?* (Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institute, 1975); Stanley S. Surrey, *Pathways to Tax Reform* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1973).

[2]*Special Analyses, Budget of the United States Government, 1978* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), p. 119.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 126.

[4]See Surrey, *Pathways to Tax Reform*, p. 37.

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receiving 10 percent of the total subsidy.[5] By contrast, the 1976 budget provided only $2.6 billion for aid to housing for those too poor to benefit from tax breaks. This $2.6 billion, of course, was in the form of a cash outlay, was highly visible and, as always, the subject of considerable controversy.

II

IF CONGRESS TRIED to convert the tax expenditure program for housing into a cash outlay, that too would be controversial. In fact, because of its gross inequities such a program might never pass Congress. Imagine a bill that would send a cash payment to homeowners, the size of the grant being highest for those with the highest salary! Those who made more than $200,000 a year would receive a check equal to 70 percent of their mortgage interest and taxes, and citizens earning $10,000 would receive a check equal to 19 percent. No matter how much one loved the rich, no congressperson in his/her right mind would vote for such a bill. But through tax expenditures, we have such a program.

The third problem with tax expenditures is that not only do they frequently pay people to do things they would do anyway, but they pay people to do things they may well not do (e.g., increase investments). Rather than provide incentives to investors, businesses, home purchasers, etc., tax expenditures frequently provide financial windfalls—mostly for those who need help the least. While incentives may be necessary in some cases, the tax expenditure route is indiscriminate, inequitable, and wasteful. In 1972 the Joint Economic Committee of Congress concluded: "... there is no body of significant evidence showing that these special tax provisions achieve their objectives efficiently."[6]

Tax expenditures and deductions are often so lucrative that some of the richest individuals and corporations manage to pay little or no federal taxes year after year. For example, between 1972 and 1975 a total of 590 citizens had earned incomes in excess of $200,000 but paid no federal taxes. Thousands of other citizens had very high incomes but paid very little in taxes. During this same period 29 major corporations reported total profits of almost $3 billion but paid no federal taxes, and 64 other corporations paid at rates of 10 percent or less despite profits of almost $11 billion. A couple of decades ago, corporations contributed about 30 percent of the tax dollar—but because of increased tax breaks they contributed only 13¢ of each tax dollar in 1977. The 11 major corporations who paid no federal taxes in 1975 are listed below along with their earnings:

	Earnings (In Millions)
Ford Motor Company	$148.1
Western Electric	185.6
Bethlehem Steel	225.0
Lockheed Aircraft	84.1
National Steel	43.4
Delta Airlines	73.7
Northwest Airlines	45.3
Manufacturer's Hanover	166.1
Chemical New York Corp.	90.5
Phelps-Dodge	44.6
Freeport Minerals	35.2

These exemptions from taxes for wealthy groups magnify the tax burden of middle-income and poor citizens and increase the severity of wealth maldistribution. Between 1953 and 1975 the tax rate for families at the median income level almost doubled, while the rate for the richest 20 percent of families increased slightly less than 30 percent. Figures released by the Census Bureau in June 1977 show that the wealthiest 40 percent of the population increased their share of total income from 64.2 percent in 1968 to 65.2 percent in 1975. The least affluent 40 percent's share declined from 18 percent in 1968 to 17 percent in 1975. Thus the wealthiest 40 percent gained a full percentage point, or about $10 billion from the lowest-income families. Additionally, between 1974 and 1975 the per capita income of families in the lowest income quintile increased 4.3 percent (during a period of 7 percent inflation), while the income of those in the highest income quintile increased 6 percent.[8] Not surprisingly, poverty increased 10.7 percent in 1975, to 25.9 million persons.

Despite these facts, there is no serious movement in Congress to deal with the tax loopholes that cause these problems, and Carter's new proposals are predictably disappointing. A recent study released by the Joint Committee on Internal Revenue Taxation estimated that tax expenditures will increase to $168.7 billion by 1982.

[5]Cushing Dolbeare, "Let's Correct the Inequities," *ADA World,* 1975 Convention Issue, April-May 1975, p. 9.
[6]Joint Economic Report, Ninety-second Congress, 2nd Session, Congress of the United States, March 23, 1972, pp. 37-38.
[7]Bureau of the Census News Release, June 7, 1977.

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An equitable reform would not be hard to formulate. If the whole deduction system were abolished, a much lower tax rate could be established for all income groups. If the government found it necessary to aid certain businesses or groups, a cash outlay system could be established. Aid received in check form would have to be accepted for what it is—welfare. This would serve to educate the public regarding the role of government. Direct outlays would also be open to public scrutiny and presumably much less invidious and more beneficial to the public good. Such a reform will not come easily, of course. Tax expenditures are too pure a product of the capitalistic imagination to be eliminated without a first-rate struggle. □

Norman Furniss and Timothy Tilton

Do We Really Live in a Welfare State?

For decades democratic socialists have debated whether it is desirable or possible to reform capitalist society. The fundamental question has hardly changed: does what has come to be known as the welfare state represent a new type of society, a suitable way station to socialism, or is it rather (as Michael Harrington has argued in these pages) "a new way of protecting the older order"? Our objective is to introduce a different way of approaching this debate and, in the process, to suggest some criteria for judging the policies of the Carter administration.

The key to evaluating "welfare state" measures is to recognize the imprecision of the term. It would be difficult to discover a modern Western regime to which the label has not been applied. In Germany alone the Federal Republic, the Third Reich, the Weimar Republic, even Bismarckian in Germany all have received this appellation. Such promiscuous use of the category suggests that efforts to formulate a single acceptable definition may be unavailing.

No modern, democratic state has failed entirely to address the difficulties resulting from the operations of unrestricted markets and property. All governments have attenuated property rights, and all have intervened in the operations of the "market." But this does not, of course, mean that all interventionist states are alike. The major issue is not that all states have a policy of intervention, but that different states employ different policies for different purposes. We propose to distinguish among three kinds of public intervention in the operation of private property. Our three "models" are the positive state, the social security state, and the social welfare state.

• As American regulatory commissions and welfare bureaucracies attest, not all government activity redounds to the welfare of the group purportedly served, let alone to the benefit of the general population. Harrington is indeed correct to argue that when governments intervene to promote the public good in a society dominated by private corporations, the corporations and the wealthy will normally be the prime beneficiaries. Policies serving primarily capitalist interests within a parliamentary regime characterize what is often referred to as the *positive state*, a system of corporate welfare.

The primary aim of the positive state is to protect the holders of property from the difficulties of unregulated markets and from redistributive demands. Its orientation is government-business collaboration for economic growth. In this relationship, business cedes much of its ability to make unhindered market decisions in return for financial assistance at home and political support abroad. The government employs the instruments of economic policy to achieve "minimalist full employment"; that is, there is a concern to keep employment high enough to assure high levels of consumption and business activity. Consternation arises when unemployment hits sectors of the labor market controlled by organized labor whose support is conducive to the smooth operation of government-business cooperation; but there is equal concern that the demand for labor not be so strong as to bid up its price and extend the influence of unions.

In the field of "welfare," there is a disinclination to do anything inconsistent with economic efficiency. This interest puts major emphasis on social insurance programs. These programs are founded

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on actuarial principles (with occasional help from general revenues) and are designed to even out income over a person's "life cycle" and to spread the risk of unemployment and illness from the individual to the general population. These programs tend to deflect potential redistribution from the rich to the poor, to noneconomic categories (the young to the old, the healthy to the sick). Social insurance has the further advantages of tying the destiny of wage-earners to the destiny of the state and of encouraging proper work habits. Since one has to make certain minimum and periodic payments to qualify for assistance, systems of social insurance in effect institute a form of compulsory savings and provide a strong incentive to conform to a regular life of work. The goal corresponds generally to what Titmuss labels the "residual welfare model": welfare policy "is to function as a means of social control."

The vision of the positive state is thus one of rugged individualism operating within the context of government promotion of balanced economic growth and protection of corporate interest. Anything more than modest collective efforts to provide for individual security is said to lead directly to what Arthur Okun has called the "big trade-off" between equality and efficiency. It is clear which value in the positive state is to take precedence. Because of its structural bias and haphazard provisions for individual security, the positive state should not, even charitably, be classified as a welfare state.

- The *social security state*, in contrast, establishes a guaranteed national minimum as a right of citizenship and thus aims to ensure economic security, educational opportunities, and access to decent health care for all citizens. It pursues a "maximalist full employment" policy, preferring to provide public employment rather than to pay unemployment insurance. It supplements social insurance programs with a variety of measures to aid the casualties of the industrial order—the chronically sick and disabled, single-parent families with small children, workers with negligible or unneeded skills. These programs are designed for workers in relatively steady employment but who are subject to cyclical unemployment and incapable of accumulating sufficient assets for a decent retirement. The social security state recognizes, however, that this insurance principle alone cannot suffice, and that in order to abolish poverty and provide security for all "from the cradle to the grave," supplemental measures such as family allowances and general assistance are required.

Above the assured minimum standard, liberal capitalist institutions and attitudes continue to flourish. The Beveridge Report, which laid the basis for Britain's post-World War II welfare programs, gave classical endorsement to such arrangements: it recommended that "the state in organizing security should not stifle incentive, opportunity, responsibility; in establishing a national minimum, it should leave room and encouragement for voluntary action by each individual to provide more for himself and his family." The governing principle of the social security state is not equality, but equality of opportunity. It borrows just enough from socialism to mandate meeting each citizen's basic ecnomic, educational, and health-care needs, but not so much that it represents anything more than a modern and noble restatement of the traditional liberal ideal.

- The difference between the vision underlying the social security and the *social welfare state* is evident when we juxtapose to Beveridge the argument of Ernst Wigforss, one of the leading Swedish Social Democratic theoreticians. For Wigforss, the wage-earner

> cannot readily agree to that view of the welfare state that is now frequently put forth, that it should secure a minimum livelihood for all, but allow whatever goes beyond this to be won through each individual's or each group's asserting itself in an unlimited competition for standards, wealth, and power. That spirit clearly conflicts with the ideas that both the trade union movement and social democracy seek to follow in their public labors . . . that it still shall be the labor movement's ideas of equality, cooperation, and solidarity, that shall set their stamp upon society's continuing transformation.

To actualize this vision requires a different policy mix from that animating the refurbished liberalism of the social security state. In economic policy government-business collaboration becomes an expedient that at least in theory can, and should, be transcended by greater public direction of investment. And the goal of full employment is to be realized more by government and union initiatives in the labor market than by public works or simply the regulation of aggregate demand.

In social as well as economic policy, the social welfare state aims to promote equality and solidarity. It seeks not merely to produce a guaranteed minimum for its citizens, but to achieve a general equality of living conditions. The primary social policy instrument for attaining equality is the

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substitution of public services for social insurance programs and public assistance in the provision of health care, child-rearing facilities, legal services, and the like. Public services give benefits to all, making no distinction as to whether the recipients can or cannot pay for these services, or whether they have contributed to the appropriate insurance programs. Through this procedure public services remove important sectors of social life from the influence of the market.

Equally important are two new policies, environmental planning and redistribution of resources. We use the term "environmental planning" in its most comprehensive sense as the regulation of property to preserve amenities, the prohibition of activities resulting in unacceptable levels of pollution, urban planning, and the development of "new towns"—in sum, an effort to inject social and collective values into a society founded, as it must be, on the good life for the individual.

The redistribution of resources similarly involves a variety of measures. "Solidaristic wage policy," as developed by the Swedish trade union movement, aims to equalize pretax income by bargaining for relatively larger wage increases to lower-income workers. Progressive taxation, combined with social services directed toward the neediest sectors of the population, equalizes living standards after taxes. Taxation of wealth and provision for broader ownership of capital, such as the Swedish Meidner Plan, attack the unequal ownership of industrial (productive) property.

This vision and the policies associated with it signify, as the other two models do not, a broadening of the locus of power. The social welfare state does not intend merely to extend benefits to the underprivileged and to raise benefits relatively over time. There is in addition an effort to bring previously underrepresented groups into the formation of economic and political policy. The ultimate aim is to shift decision-making power from employer to employer and (the two are not necessarily compatible) to increase citizen participation within all decision-making organizations.

II

THESE THREE MODELS of governmental intervention are ideal types, but they correspond to important theoretical programs and actual government activities. While no state fits any of the patterns exactly (and numerous states contain elements of all three), the positive state broadly reflects American liberalism in theory and practice. Even proposals for reform are framed within its governing assumptions, as witnessed by Okun's postulate that there does exist a linear trade-off between efficiency and equality. Quite ignored is the hardly socialist advice of such commentators as Galbraith, who as early as *The Affluent Society* was arguing for an expansion of the public sector that would *reorient* the economy toward more urgent human needs. To appreciate this point one need only observe the Democratic party's traditional advocacy of public spending as the necessary and sufficient condition for public betterment. The main thrust of Democratic policy, devoid of any coherent conception of social purpose, remains an indiscriminate welcome for all organized interests (usually the already powerful) to feast at the public trough combined with a desperate desire to avoid a loss of "business confidence."

The social security state represents the program of modern European liberals based on the ideas and policy proposals of such social theorists as Beveridge and Ohlin. At least until recently Great Britain offered an attractive example of its accomplishments.

Sweden in some respects approximated the model of the social welfare state. There the labor movement has significantly altered the society in the direction recommended by theorists like Tawney and Wigforss. Much remained to be done however, and documents such as the Myrdal report on *Equality* and the Meidner Plan did point the way to a fully developed social welfare state.

In evaluating welfare-statist measures, then, it becomes necessary to consider which type of intervention is occurring, or, more bluntly, to ask the old question, who benefits? Does public initiative strip capitalists of some of their traditional property rights and establish them in the hands of the public or its representatives? Does it favor the democratic socialist values of liberty, equality, democracy, solidarity, security, and economic efficiency?

The assessment must depend upon the type of state under review. Rather than simply concluding in dogmatic a priori fashion that welfare-statist measures cannot restructure capitalist society, these standards should be applied to determine whether social reforms introduce elements of socialism or simply reproduce capitalist society.

These standards can also be used to provide criteria for judging the Carter administration. They may be particularly useful because of the essential-

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ly irrelevant focus on government reorganization as the answer to the obvious deficiencies in domestic programs.

Baldly stated, the bureaucracy is a "mess" because the policies bureaucrats are supposed to administer are a mess. Progress, if it is to be meaningful, must involve fundamental policy changes that will move the United States away from the positive state model in at least the four critical areas of employment, health, income security, and living environment. Of these, employment policy is the most basic, for full employment is essential not only to stop the wastage of human talent and the various social pathologies associated with unemployment, but also to provide the resources for other public initiatives.

The creation of a national health service is the second most important priority. Ideally it should be organized, like education, as a public service, possibly with modest user charges. A public insurance program covering basic health care costs would be a second-best but acceptable solution. Greater emphasis ought to fall on preventive medicine, especially during pregnancy and childhood. What cannot be tolerated is a system built on private insurance with invidious distinctions among citizens who can and cannot afford such coverages.

Third, the defects of the private welfare system must be recognized. Employee pension plans and security arrangements now disproportionately favor the well organized or well-to-do. They fail to benefit those without steady employment. Nearly half of all firms still do not provide retirement plans and gain an economic advantage over their competitors by not doing so. Enactment of these welfare measures would move the United States close to the social security state model.

Finally, the enormous social costs of private real estate development and unregulated urban and industrial expansion must be reduced. In housing, this goal entails the building of durable equities into the housing stock—the creation of public agencies to buy, build, rent, and sell housing and associated neighborhood services of a quality significantly above that which the recipients could afford on their own resources.

The Carter administration, it can safely be predicted, will not act satisfactorily in these areas. All the more reason for democratic socialists to appreciate what sorts of governmental intervention can lead to the creation of a more just and equal society, and which merely promote and entrench our present American "positive state." □

William Kornblum

A Crisis in Basic Steel

The crisis in the American steel industry is not the one we read about. The steel corporations' pleas for protection from foreign imports mask an effort to wrest lucrative tax and environmental concessions from Washington, and the Carter White House seems eager to please and avoid a confrontation that would label it "antibusiness." So the real crisis in the steel industry is the one being experienced by the families of more than 25,000 ex-steelworkers. And the inability of either the government or the steelworkers themselves to mobilize an effective response to the companies' actions creates a moral crisis for us all.

Summer and fall of 1977 were disastrous for the nation's steelworkers: Bethlehem Steel announced cutbacks and plant closings in Lackawanna (3,500 laid off) and Johnstown, Pa. (3,500 laid off, plant modernization scrapped). The Youngstown Sheet and Tube Corporation announced plans to close the Campbell works outside Youngstown, Ohio (5,000 terminated). The U.S. Steel Corporation announced it would close facilities in Youngstown and hinted it might further reduce capacity elsewhere (at least 5,000 layoffs and permanent terminations). Alan Wood Steel in Conshohken, Pa., just West of Philadelphia, closed forever (3,000 terminated). Kaiser and Armco Steel cut the labor force, as did Republic and National Steel. No steel town missed the impact of layoffs and shutdowns.

In response to pressure from the union and steel-community congressmen, the President convened a Treasury Department Task Force chaired by Undersecretary Anthony Soloman. Last December this committee issued a report that has become the foundation of the Administration's steel policy. The Treasury Department has called for a system of "reference pricing," which sets the average price of steel at $330 per ton. Foreign steel sold at less than that price in the U.S. will trigger a Treasury investigation to determine if the steel is being "dumped" at a price less than the cost of production abroad. A finding of dumping will result in punitive tariffs to discourage further attempts. Coupled with this measure is a promise of at least $900 million in tax breaks and investment credits for plant modernization. *But*

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nowhere is there any suggestion that industry accountability will be ensured. The corporations are given a clear sign: business as usual. Not the barest hint of how future layoffs can be prevented, or at least fully compensated, even though most analysts agree that plant modernization will continue to eliminate steelworkers' jobs, and especially in regions like the Northeast that are already suffering from massive cuts in their labor force.

Among the world's major steel producers only the United States continues to give its steel companies such a free hand in opening and closing plants. If they do not have nationalized steel industries as in Great Britain, the steel-producing nations at least have a centralized form of national industrial planning. As long as we lack the same control over investment and job reductions, we will continue to have these crises whenever one of the corporations decides that conditions allow the closing of another less productive unit.

Before the fall 1977 shutdown, the major steel producers in the Youngstown area (the Mahoning River Valley) were Youngstown Sheet and Tube, Republic Steel, and U.S. Steel. These corporations all have works in the Chicago-Gary area expanding at much faster rates than the Youngstown operations. The Mahoning Valley share of national steel production was 13.2 percent in 1947, 10.8 percent in 1955, and 8.2 percent by 1968. Construction of the General Motors Lordstown plant and the location of smaller automotive plants in the valley maintain the demand for steel products through the 1960s, but in general the number of Youngstown steel fabrication outlets has been decreasing steadily since the 1940s. By 1970 more than 50 percent of manufacturing employment in the area was in primary metals, as opposed to about 40 percent in the Pittsburgh area, and 6.2 percent nationally. In other words, the decline of basic steel production in the Youngstown area was further aggravated by its dependence on employment in basic steel rather than on secondary manufacturing. For more than 30 years steelworkers in the region have witnessed the slow death of their communities.

Marvin Weinstock, one of the most influential steel labor leaders in the area and an insurgent candidate for vice-president in the 1977 elections of the United Steelworkers of America (U.S.W.A.), sums up the situation:

> It's been going down like this for many years. There's been no planning, no direction. As long as . . . the demand was fairly high, we could go fairly well, but in slack times this area was always hardest hit. They'd always say, "When Detroit's down, Youngstown's flat." Of course a big part of our problem is due to unfavorable location. You know, we are really land-based here and it's hard to compete with lakeside plants, especially the new "greenfield" operations that you have in the Gary area and in the South.
>
> Yet when I think of the millions these mills have made for a few families in Youngstown, and how the mills were built by people in the community who got so little from it all, I have to remember the time a few years ago when with $80 million to install a Basic Oxygen Furnace these works might have been saved. . . . There was simply no money put into any plant modernization.

IRONIES ABOUND in the recent plant closings. During the 1977 steel contract negotiations I. W. Abel, outgoing U.S.W.A. president, pressed for "lifetime" job security for steelworkers. The contract fell short of what Abel hoped to accomplish, but it did establish the "65 Rule," which guarantees a steelworker with 20 years or more service (in the same plant), and 45 years or more of age, immediate right to full pension. This replaced the earlier "70-80 pension rule," which granted pension rights to steelworkers under 55 whose age and years of service added up to 80, and full benefits to steelworkers over 55 whose age and years of service equal 70. In good times, these formulas could lead to early retirement for career steelworkers, thus providing mobility in the plants. In periods of slack employment, which have marked the industry in recent decades with only a few exceptions like the year 1974, alternative sources of income for retired steelworkers are limited and the effects of early retirement on plant hiring tend to be minimal. In any case, by closing the Campbell Works in Youngstown before January 1, 1978, when these pension changes would have gone into effect, the Youngstown Sheet and Tube Corporation deprived hundreds of veteran steelworkers of the pensions they would otherwise have been qualified to receive under the new contract. This contract also guaranteed two years of supplemental unemployment benefits, paid out of the gneral corporation fund rather than from local plant accounts, for workers with 20 years or more seniority. To compound the damage, the date of Youngstown's closing also obviated this clause. Jobless steelworkers at the Campbell Works received only three months of supplemental benefits before the local fund was exhausted.

Youngstown area steelworkers are extremely bitter about all this. Marvin Weinstock says:

> You can't imagine what it was like in the first weeks after the company announced the closings. There was

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such terrible pressure to try to do something! There was such desperation and anger! Now most of the talk is either about the possibility of opening the mills again, or about unemployment benefits and home selling.

The young worker is getting the worst deal. "How am I going to get a home and raise a family?" You hear that question over and over . . . . There's no future for that skilled young guy. They make applications to the plants in Houston and Lorrain but even if they get hired there, the odds are against it, they'll go to the bottom of the job list. I shudder to think of what will become of Campbell and Struthers, the mill communities here. They were both towns of at least 20,000, and come this spring the panic-selling is going to be terrible. Who's going to buy these little mill houses now?

Irony of ironies, the steelworkers' union is locked into a conciliatory position with regard to private enterprise. The "Partners in Progress" slogan of the "Experimental Negotiating Agreement" in basic steel, as the contract is called, generally obliges the union's International officers to support the steel executives' interpretation of reality. In the January 1978 edition of the union paper, *Steel Labor,* U.S.W.A. president Lloyd McBride welcomes the U.S. Treasury report and "reference pricing" as a "positive first-step development to help solve job loss." He adds "To the extent that a reference pricing system does not fully accomplish our goals of restoring lost job opportunities, we will continue to press for quota-setting orderly market agreements, and if voluntary relief cannot be obtained, we will demand congressional action establishing legislated quotas."

McBride also promises continued advocacy of railroad rebuilding, urban mass transit programs, and further antidumping enforcement according to the 1974 Trade Act and the Trade Readjustment Assistance Program. Clearly, the demand for public spending on capital projects is a big part of the answer to slack demand in basic steel, but nowhere in the official union response to recent layoffs is there mention of the probable further effects of plant modernization on employment.

Given its narrow mandate in the 1977 union election, one wonders why the McBride administration has so far failed to press for an effective labor voice in setting national priorities in basic steel. Part of the answer may be found in a TV confrontation between Youngstown steelworkers and McBride in October 1977 when plant shutdowns were being announced. A union official from the Campbell works expressed the rage of the steelworkers:

In the last two weeks 14,000 jobs have been eliminated at Johnstown. at Lackawanna, and here at Youngstown Sheet and Tube. And instead . . . instead of saying that we're not going to be thrown out in the street like a bunch of dogs to starve . . . they're parroting the company line. The companies say that "it's too bad that we have to do this to you . . . we feel terrible." We're saying we don't care how the companies feel; we don't care if they pay it or the government pays it, we want our jobs.

Lloyd McBride goes around and says it's too bad, it's a cry of despair. It should be a battle cry, it should be a battle cry of all steelworkers that we're going to stand up and fight for our jobs, that we're not going to go back and starve. The people that own this company are not going back to shacks and eat Wheaties, they're going back to mansions and eat caviar. . . .

Youngstown Sheet and Tube . . . cry about imports, yet they buy roll-making equipment from Japan. Republic Steel cries about the imports, yet they bought slab steel from France last year . . . . They have been eliminating our jobs for years, combining jobs, speeding us up, shutting plants, and they want to focus our attention . . . on the Japanese.

Noting that this speaker supported his opponent in the February 1977 union election, a fact that was obvious since the union official wore a "Sadlowski" sticker on his hard hat, McBride countered:

. . . it's the kind of rhetoric that really on close analysis makes no sense. I'm sure that Youngstown did not close the Youngstown plant in order to prove any kind of point. They have decided to . . . take out of operation a multimillion-dollar operation. If there was a market for the steel . . . I think they would much prefer to sell that steel at a price that would give them profit.

. . . . I'm interested in preserving jobs. The wild rhetoric that you just heard won't save jobs. We're in a free economy; there's no law that can force a company to operate a plant against its will, and all of the anger and the frustration that was demonstrated by that steelworker is understandable but it doesn't answer anything. The answer is, how are we going to have our members make steel that can be sold in this country against unfair competition. And the only way I know that that's going to happen is to remedy the unfair competition.

IN ORDER TO MEET competition head-on, the American steel industry is attempting to close as many of its less efficient plants as it can. The President's Council on Wage and Price Stability Report of October 1977 shows that corporations with highly centralized plants far outperform those with numerous locations. Thus, in the first half of

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1976, well before the latest round of plant closings, Youngstown Sheet and Tube reported an after-tax profit of 1.8 percent on sales, as opposed to Inland Steel's record 9.5 percent. Inland's Indiana Harbor plant, with some 17,000 steelworkers employed in a highly integrated operation, has about the most efficient production in the industry. Now that Youngstown Sheet and Tube is writing off most of its Mahoning Valley operation, it will produce the bulk of its products in its more efficient Indiana Harbor works. All the major companies, including U.S. Steel, Bethlehem Steel, Republic Steel, and National Steel, will also seek to close smaller production units and modernize existing operations. In view of all this one might expect McBride at least to call for some *quid pro quo* from industry in return for the investment credits that may otherwise lead to additional layoffs for his members.

There is fault to find with an economic system that allows a corporation to operate in a community until it begins to lose profits, at which point it can run with almost no responsibility for the consequences. The U.S.W.A. president has said nothing on this issue. He chooses instead to defend "private enterprise."

For the past decade steelmakers have been scurrying to find alternative investments, as steel profits become tight. The U.S. Steel Corporation lists itself as "a Diversified Producer of Materials and Services," and, since 1966, has become one of the nation's leading plastics producers. In an interview with Agis Sapulkis of the *New York Times* (January 15, 1978), Edgar B. Speer, chairman of the Board of U.S. Steel, noted that nonsteel divisions accounted for about 30 percent of the Corporation's shipments in 1976 but that these brought in more than 50 percent of the profits. This may be reassuring for the holders of U.S. Steel stocks, but it is alarming for the working people of the nation's manufacturing belt.

The steel executives will counter by claiming that diversification and modernization produces jobs in the long run, if not in basic steel than in other industries. This may be true in some instances. The general trend, however, is for investments to be made in chemicals and other highly automated operations with few jobs for former steelworkers. We have no way of knowing to what extent plans are being made for further layoffs and capacity reductions. When plant closings were announced in late 1977, such steel union "insurgents" as Ed Sadlowski, James Balanoff (director of the Chicago-Gary U.S.W.A. District 31), and Linus Wampler (director of the ore mining district in Minnesota and Northern Michigan), called for immediate federal investigation of the industry as a first step toward public control over job reductions. This call was not taken up by the union's International office.

This "crisis" of political will among steelworkers' leaders may reach something of a climax in fall 1978 when more than 3,000 union delegates will meet in Atlantic City for their U.S.W.A. biannial convention. There is speculation in the major steel union halls that the McBride administration may encourage proposals to change the union's constitution by replacing the current system of referendum elections with a convention vote for union offices above the local level. The convention is dominated by at least 900 paid union officials, who generally obtain credentials from small locals that cannot afford to send an elected delegate. Thus, from a parliamentary viewpoint, it would be relatively easy for the U.S.W.A. leadership to make this change in Atlantic City, a change that would hinder the kind of popular insurgency that has brought an Ed Sadlowski and a Marvin Weinstock to the attention of steelworkers in 1977. Lloyd McBride promised on "Meet The Press" one week before the 1977 election that, if elected, he would not seek a convention ballot. We shall soon see what that promise was worth.

The Fall 1978 Steelworkers convention will also become an arena for debate over the union's job policies. Many local union presidents in basic steel are calling for the 35-hour week at no loss in pay as a key demand in the 1980 contract negotiations. Others seek innovations like the Guaranteed Annual Wage plans, which have been won by such automation-hit unions as the International Longshoremen's Association. Clearly, the U.S.W.A. will have to win major job-security concessions from the steel corporations if it is going to mend the internal strife that became so evident in the 1977 International election. But McBride's failure to press the corporations and the federal government for immediate job-creating programs in places like Youngstown does not bode well for the steel towns or their people in the coming years of crisis. □

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Alberto Ronchey

Terror in Italy, Between Red & Black

Italy's instability is unique among the disorders common in contemporary industrial societies in which, as Pierre Viansson-Ponté puts it, "many dikes in the collective unconscious have begun to give way." In Italy the economic maladjustment caused by the enormous inflation of oil prices has had shattering effects, and our political life could best be recorded on a seismograph. The day-to-day chronicle of Italian events now resembles the philosopher Karl Popper's memories of Austria in the period between World War I and the rise of Nazism. "Civilian guerrilla warfare," Popper recalls, "was an endemic condition, which from time to time would erupt in a serious explosion. It was in July 1927, after a full-scale shoot-out in Vienna, that I began to fear the worst. . . ."

There have been 702 terrorist episodes in Italy in 1975, 1,353 episodes in 1976, and 2,081 in 1977. During the '60s and the beginning of the '70s, "the strategy of tension" was chiefly the work of neo-Fascists who enjoyed the complicity of sections of the secret service. In the last two years, however, the terrorism of the ultra-right has suffered grave, perhaps definitive setbacks. Of the 24 persons killed by and among terrorists since January 1976, only one killing can be ascribed to the criminal activity of the Black Bands. On the contrary, with the founding of the Red Brigades in 1972, of the Armed Proletarian Nuclei in 1974, and the subsequent proliferation of revolutionary sects, the ultra-left has now taken over this field. Fascist terrorism, which used mainly explosives, was blind, indiscriminate, and impersonal; it lacked a social base or "cover." The terrorism of the ultra-left, which can be described as an anomalous partisan movement at war with a democracy, chiefly uses pistols, strikes at precise symbolic and individual targets, and tends to infiltrate street riots in order to direct them toward ever more frequent forms of urban guerrilla warfare.

The progression of events in 1977 illustrates certain characteristics of this phenomenon and the "social culture" in which terrorism will germinate and thrive. In January 1977 there appeared in our universities a new group called the Metropolitan Indians, with their derisive nihilism, frenzied dances, and faces marked with war paint. "We have neither past nor future," they wrote on the walls, "history is killing us." This confirmed the prognosis that a generation alienated by the collapse of mass education and the economic crisis would oscillate easily between one irrational movement and another, much as the masses of the unemployed middle class did during the years before Fascism.

In February the Indians and, close on their heels and armed with 38s, a neo-Leninist group called the "Autonomous," rebelled against everyone, including the Communists. At the University of Rome they launched a virulent assault on a speaker's platform that was occupied by Luciano Lama, secretary of the CGIL, the Communist-led trade-union movement. This gave rise to rather premature judgments concerning the decline of the Communist hegemony, since the pathological spread of splinter groups presupposes some sort of final reckoning, and in any event the dust is bound to settle on the largest gravitational mass. In March, the urban

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guerrilla campaign exploded in open battles in the streets of Rome and Bologna, and the police intervened with armored cars. Since June, guerrilla tactics have gone hand-in-hand with day-by-day terrorism, which still continues. Now 155 members of the "Armed Band" are in jail charged with various crimes, another 88 are to be tried and have been provisionally set free, and only 22 suspects of terrorism are still being sought by the police. Yet, every day members of clandestine groups organized in honeycomb-like cells, aim their pistols at the legs of judges, police officers and ordinary policemen, journalists, local representatives of various political parties, factory managers and foremen (many of whom must now walk on crutches). The ritual murder of prominent figures in the legal apparatus, such as Genoa's attorney general and the president of the Turin Bar Association, continues inexorably, and the cases of criminal arson in the factories mount higher and higher. In November, in broad daylight, using a Nagant 7.62 pistol, terrorists fired four shots into the face of the assistant managing editor of Turin's *La Stampa,* a daily with a liberal-socialist position; the *coup de grâce,* the fourth bullet, was delivered as the victim lay on the ground.

Terrorism thus comes to be pure ideological homicide, the violent extinction of any alternative opinion or thought, the extreme personalization of an obsessive form of the "class struggle." Earlier when the terrorists used to aim their pistols low as a kind of intimidation or reprisal, they revealed an exaltation already inclined to homicide but held back; calculated, still capable of taking things gradually and of making distinctions—that is, with some political awareness and some sense of pity in their summary judgments. When they assassinated important figures in the legal apparatus of the State, they were possessed by the impulse to strike down, at least in effigy, those powers they could not overturn. But when they began to aim their shots higher in order to "execute" the simple interpreter of a system of thought and judgment, there suddenly burst onto the scene the dark shadow of a group that arrogated to itself the "ideological" right of life or death over anyone standing in its path.

In the historic "three waves " of terrorism described by Walter Laqueur, even in the last wave that for a decade now has engulfed some Western societies, phenomena of this kind never appeared on so vast a scale within the liberal political systems. The tradition of terrorism is almost unknown in Italian history, except for some isolated instances, such as the assassination of King Umberto I and a few episodes accompanying Fascism's rise to power. Usually terrorism has gone with despotic or colonial regimes. Since the "criminal simple-mindedness" of Dostoevsky's "devils" (in *The Possessed*), European terrorists have utterly failed, save for Ireland, where the inspiration of their movement was ethnic rather than ideological. Recently, the South American Tupamaros, ERP, and Montoneros have given expression to the convulsions within Third World nations enmeshed in the struggle with the despotism of military Juntas. The Palestinian, Lebanese, Cypriot, Croatian, Basque, and Northern Irish movements all have radical, atavistic-religious, nationalist, and separatist rather than revolutionary characteristics. In the United States, the Weathermen and similar groups have done very little in terms of disrupting the *status quo.* In Germany the Red Army Fraction has always been circumscribed, even though efficient and pitiless to the point of blindly following the Hitlerian precept: "Ferocity can sway souls." But in Italy now for the first time terroristic guerrilla combat, on a broad scale and with revolutionary motives, has become a chronic state of affairs, translating into the terms of metropolitan strategy set down in Carlos Marighella's manual for the *focos de guerrilla* of the South American peasants: "One hundred flowers have bloomed and they are one hundred armed groups."

Who are these new terrorists, whose minds are so full of furious ideological hatred? How did they get to this point? First of all, one must

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distinguish between subjective and objective data, the prime psycho-ideological factors (the genetic blueprint of the extremists) and the sociological conditions that foster the spread of revolutionary terrorism (the sick areas of society, from which its followers can be recruited, e.g., the universities overflowing with declassed masses of students, the urban peripheries swarming with impoverished people, and the prisons. In Italy, the conscious spread of psychological and ideological aversions that regard as debilitating and repugnant any form of debate with an "enemy," insofar as he represents a form of absolute evil, can be traced back to the '60s, when "revolutionary" thought was molded by the emotional influence of distant conflicts (Vietnam, South America, and the Middle East), the social disorders caused by the economic boom, and the rise of the youth movements.

At the beginning of the '70s, partly because the 30-year stalemate between the major political parties that made it impossible to achieve any real change in government, it became clear that a shift from an extremism of "ends" to an extremism of "means" was taking place. With the economic crisis, the shift became quite obvious. In Italy it was this transition from one type of morality to another that set off the explosions on the left.

Every extremism concerned with ends—that is, utopian-existential ends—rests on a persuasion that the excellence of a goal is commensurate with its grandeur. It presupposes that an ideology is without doubt a sublime truth rather than a hypothesis and, when pushed to the extreme, such an ideology becomes an absolute, sublime truth. This often is the condition in Italy, a country that holds a kind of frontier between the faiths of West and East, Europe and the Third World. Here these rival faiths often clash. But at least until recent times, the risk element in Italy was present only in the thought of the traditional extremists. On the contrary, every extremism of means—not necessarily tied or proportionate to that of the ends, indeed often rather petty when it came to ends—consisted of simple direct action: dynamiting, political kidnappings for extortion or punishment, assassinations as warnings or reprisals, and other acts of violence. All these were undertaken in the attempt to attain a specific yet limited goal, which might even be unknown to the perpetrators, since only the leaders who had planned and ordered the act knew the goal. For example, even now the ends, often pursued with sensational means by terrorists in Northern Ireland or by the Palestinian Fedahyn, are confined to nationalist ends, which in Italy is also true of the Fascists who employ terrorism but do not have any plan for a society that might result from a total change in social relations. In Italy an extremism of ends has always been more congenial to the left than the right, while an extremism of means could be seen in the very terrorist symbols flaunted by the Fascists (the daggers and skulls), producing even in recent times such neo-Fascist or neo-Nazi grouplets as the New Order, the Black Order, Year Zero, Phoenix, National Vanguard, and Avenge.

How has it come about that an extremism of means has also developed on the left, even though the Italian left, which bases its ideas on Marx, not Stirner, is far from believing in the "conceptual necessity" of terrorism? The leap from ends to means has been favored by such circumstances as the suggestive power of the mass media, which has poured out images and accounts of distant guerrilla wars, revolutions, and acts of terrorism, the fascination with danger after 30 years of peace, and by the economic and political crisis. And then there is the ever-more frequent assertion by the ultra-left that the existing society, compared with that other society it has in mind, is intolerable for even one more day and that, faced with the State's repressive violence, revolutionary terrorism is simply counterterrorism. And so, by dint of repetition and saturation, and the rise of an extremism of ends;[1] there also exploded on the ultra-left an extremism of means.[2]

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[1] I refer here to all the organizations to the left of the CP, from Manifesto to the movement called Continual Struggle, from Workers' Vanguard to the collectives organized by the Autonomous groups, together with

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If at the beginning the strategy of violent distruption was the work of the right, at least at the time of the massacre in the Piazza Fontana,[3] by now numerous articles and accounts have documented the seditious activities of the left, along with hundreds of biographies of the persons involved. For example, the Red Brigades emerged out of the Metropolitan Political Collective of Milan, which was composed of both dissident Communists and Catholics. The Communists hailed from the traditional CP strongholds, such as Reggio Emilia, where the grip of party control had been loosened with the dissolution of Leninist doctrine regarding the concept of revolution. The Catholics—such as Renato Curcio and, even more, Margherita Cagol who was later killed in a shoot-out with the police—had actually been practicing Catholics until two years before. They then finally converted to the postreligious ideology that transfers the absolute values of transcendental faith to the sanctification of social events.[4]

The two processes ran parallel. What happened among the young Communists was obvious: as the party's revisionism transformed the CP's character, the revolutionary virus formerly held in check and, as it were, guarded by the party's armature with the promise of a "day of reckoning," bubbled over and produced a thick fog of intransigent theories, which then resulted in the pollution of the armed groups. The itinerary of the groups of Catholic origin has been similar, for in Italy, as in South America, after contact with the Communists, they reinterpreted the ancient apocalyptic aversion to "the authorities, the rich, the educated, and the powerful." Franco Ferrarotti, once the sociology teacher of the Red Brigadist Renato Curcio at the University of Trento, observed: "They refused to accept distinctions between the mediated and the immediate, between principles and direct action. They were shocked by any discussion of the opportuness of a particular action. They seemed possessed by a millennial fury." This is what the Communist Giorgio Amendola, remembering the contribution of Catholic groups to extremism, called "an ahistorical conception of the world." The sociologist Francesco Alberoni also connects this phenomenon to the parallel difficulties of the Catholic Church and the Italian Communist party, both authoritarian structures that have in large measure lost their traditional power to impose "rigorous discipline, simple faith, and the pleasure of obedience."

For a number of years now a significant proportion of extremists have gone into clandestine work, protected by an area of social support and conspiracy of silence that the armed extremists of other nations do not enjoy. The Red Brigades in the North and the Armed Proletarian Groups in the South use as cover for their activity the violent struggles in the factories, urban guerrilla warfare,[5] and politicized uprisings in the prisons. The "rank and file" of the clandestine movement now seems to be present in the world of the factories, from Sit-Siemens to Marelli, from Breda to Pirelli, from Ansaldo to Fiat; and now in 1977 alone nine factory managers in Fiat plants were violently attacked with firearms. A widespread political literature, and not a few students, regard the terrorists as

many theoretical magazines and left-oriented radio stations.

[2]Among the major organizations, in order of importance, there are the Red Brigades, the Armed Proletarian Nuclei, the Front Line, and the Armed Struggle for Communism.

[3]On December 12, 1969, a time bomb caused the death of 17 people and wounded 87 others in the Farmers' Bank at the Piazza Fontana in Milan. There were other attempts of this kind. The source of these operations seems to have been Fascist, with the obscure complicity of the secret services, even though at the start the anarchist Pietro Valpreda was accused. The inquiries of the magistrature, though not yet concluded, have ascertained that 50 "timers" (English in original) had been bought by the neo-Fascist Franco Freda, a member of a conspiratorial group on the extreme Right.

[4]The origins of the Montoneros in Argentina, led by Mario Firmenich and Fernando Vaca Narvaja, are quite similar.

[5]Among the most recent episodes, a bloody feud has started in Rome in January 1978 between young extremists of right and left, and several pistol fights have ensued.

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"comrades who are making a mistake." Perhaps they think that they are mistaken only in their marksmanship. During the demonstrations in September 1977 at the Palasport Stadium in Bologna, at least 10,000 people shouted, "Long Live Curcio." In a school in Rome the announcement of an assassination attempt on a Demo-Christian leader was greeted with applause. Nothing similar has ever happened in connection with the exploits of the Baader-Meinhof group in Germany.

These and other episodes illustrate the exceptional nature of the Italian phenomenon, while the growth of the area of social support around armed extremism seems to be directly proportional to the changes in the Italian Communist party. In 1968, in Moscow, Enrico Berlinguer still cited statistics of Italian strikes as proof of his party's revolutionary commitment; today he exhorts the workers to limit their strikes. In the past the Italian CP was Stalinist; today it is not even in complete agreement on the question of Leninism. A writer who was formerly a Communist has explained the consequences of this with the following analogy: "It is as though suddenly the biggest dealer in drugs cut off all supplies. The boys go nuts."

Armed extremism is thus favored above all by such circumstances as the PCI's pragmatic turn. Moreover, the phenomenon is favored by three sociological factors, which do much to foster the disintegration of the living tissue of everyday existence.

- The first factor contributing to social instability—the tempo of the rural exodus, a sudden "Biblical" migration—has far surpassed the tempo of industrial development. Hence the appearance of uprooted, subproletarian masses and the overcrowding in the cities—the "belts" that surround Turin, the so-called Koreas in Milan, and the illegal shantytowns that have sprung up on the outskirts of Rome because of the chaotic settlement of migrants from the countryside.
- The second factor: in the hearts of the cities, the university population has reached a million students, three times that of England. These students are often economic outcasts living on the fringes who cannot look forward to any substantial future in terms of jobs or careers. Pursuing the goal of universal higher education, which might be conceivable at the end of a long process but not at its beginning, Italian society is the only one in the industrial world, the U.S.S.R. included, that has not set limits to mass recruitment for the universities, at least in relation to the available resources. It continues to give legal recognition to all the diplomas granted. The University of Rome alone must take in 120,000 students (which in practice means about 70 square centimeters of space per student) without commensurate material and technical resources, without a job supply proportionate to expectations. In such areas of "social parking" nothing could be easier than to recruit troops for revolutionary extremism.
- Finally, a third and general factor of instability: the "interrupted development" after the oil crisis, caused by the changed terms of trade that put shackles on the Italian economy (since it is purely a refiner, not a producer), has sharpened the contradiction between the continuing expectations of the mass of the people and the limitations of the productive setup.

At this point, it is obvious that the uprooted semiintellectual products of the universities living on the economic fringes of society (like the declassed, nihilistic intellectuals of the times of Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Alexander Ulianov, Lenin's brother—but now on a mass scale) would go out into the streets with the uprooted of the shantytowns (a Lumpenproletariat filled with grim fury, just like the Russian masses before the revolution), in the weakest of the industrial societies, thus offering a kind of social "cover" for the armed sects.

These circumstances permit one to reply only with the greatest caution to a question that for years now always crops up in regard to Italian terrorism: "Who is behind it?" Perhaps nobody; perhaps only the solidarity of the various terrorisms that operate in other nations. The social and political roots of the

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phenomenon are here, in Italy. Terrorists, with their dark tangle of ideas and passions, are not by necessity organized from the outside. Who was behind Nechaev when he welcomed Bakunin's slogan "learn from the bandits"? To suppose an external conspiracy directed from a single tenacious center, which can manipulate groups on the right and multitudes on the extreme left in the same way that the Nazis used the paranoiac Dutch Communist van der Lubbe to set the Reichstag fire, one must first of all clarify the *cui prodest*—who would gain from it? Who would be interested in the disruption of Italian society? Who would find it to their interest, and for what purpose, in view of what solution, to demonstrate that Italy is ungovernable?

The Greek Colonels no longer exist, nor does the Salazarist *Pide*, nor Franco's state power. In its turn, the CIA, whether or not it is controllable since being subjected to open publicity, can hardly ignore the fact that demonstrating Italy's ungovernability increases the probability of the "historic compromise" between the Communists and Catholics—just as the German BND cannot ignore this. As for the KGB, there is no confirmation of the rumor that certain leaders of the Red Brigade stayed for some time in Czechoslavkia. In any case, it would be difficult today for the Russians to overlook the fact that Italian ungovernability can bring the first of the Eurocommunist parties, whose politics has for some time now been heretical if not schismatic, into a ministerial coalition. There is also Quadaffi, whom Sadat calls "the fool of Libya," but he appears to be more interested in buying large packets of stock. The Italian situation is above all the most abnormal self-disruption of government in our time among the democracies.

This does not exclude the possibility that behind certain episodes there may be someone who at times bets on the vulnerability of Italy as "the weakest link in the European chain," on the irreparable nature of its crisis, and on the apocalyptic subculture in revolt against the very left culture that generated it. For example, one cannot exclude the possibility that during certain days of urban guerrilla warfare, when the young people of the Manifesto, PDUP, Workers' Vanguard, and Continual Struggle groups were continually astonished at being infiltrated by the members of the Autonomous group armed with 38s, while in their turn the Autonomous group discovered that they were being infiltrated by Red Brigadists and Napists, there might have been some professional sharpshooters on hand who had come from far away and had even infiltrated the Brigadists and the Napists. But all this would be of little consequence without the mass that can be maneuvered by these groups and that now is supplied by the Italian social collapse. And all this would be inconsequential without a utopian-literary culture in which every day it "seems that even the most intelligent play, quite coldly, the comedy of exaltation." Indeed, the very facts of the sociological crisis cannot explain everything, at least for anyone who does not want to put his entire trust in that "sociological determinism" that absolves almost every act by referring to the social condition of the person performing it.

So one must return to the psychological and ideological characteristics of armed extremism. "They have four ideas in their head and a revolver in their pocket," some frightened theoreticians of Italian ultra-leftism now complain. Or perhaps just two ideas: the "revolution" as the absolute good, the "enemy" as the absolute evil. Yet the very same ultra-leftist theoreticians continue tenaciously to inculcate such concepts in people's minds and to do everything to keep these concepts afloat. They have even advised against reading Solzhenitsyn's *Gulag* books, though Le Roy Ladurie considers the exiled writer "contemporary Russia's best historian," and Roy Medvedev warned that after reading this book few people could possibly remain "the same as they were before." For "the good of the cause," fearing that their faith might be slightly damaged, they have even suggested to the generation of 1968 a psychological self-censorship on the southeast Asian experience at the end of the revolutionary war, despite the Vietnamese

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"reeducation camps," the slaughter of Cambodian peasants—and, indeed, the new Gulag.

Extremist thought, which in its theoretical fixity ignores everything outside its own sphere, proclaims itself innocent and does not raise such problems and scruples. Thus the problem of truth regresses to a pre-Hegelian and predialectical stage. And thus one can understand how the advocates of extremism of means consider their Manichean and militant vision of the struggle between the forces of "good" and "evil" an infallible one, even to the point of believing themselves called upon to kill in the name of a goal that appears to them so obviously great as to transcend any and all of the ordinary moral rules of conduct.

The notion that precisely such a vision of the world led to the ideological blood bath of the first half of our century, the epoch of Stalin and Hitler, seems far from widespread. Already that history seems to be unknown, and it appears to be very difficult to transmit the experience. Cultivating conventional images of a revolutionary epic and eschatology, a generation has been educated to historic optimism and does not know the actual history of the revolutionary wars. It does not know that since Goethe's time revolutionary war has always been a history of "corpses and excrement," like war in general, right down to the times of "good old Orwell," and beyond him. This generation believes that revolution is beautiful, like a movie by Theo Anghelopoulos; it has never seen revolution and would like to. It imagines a struggle between the forces of good and evil, yet it explains all defeats as a conspiracy of the gods of Olympus. It discovers that our time was born in Russia a century ago, with the first Nihilists. Yet even if by chance it found out that Engels described history as "the cruelest of all gods, driving its triumphal chariot over mountains of corpses," there are few pedagogues who are willing to remember Engels's warning: "Those who imagine that they've made a revolution always discover the day after that they did not know what they wanted and that the revolution that was made has nothing in common with the revolution they meant to make. And precisely here is what is "behind" Italian terrorism, apart from the crises of a decade.

What is the specific, realistic goal of the strategists of revolutionary guerrilla warfare? It is stated in every document, quite obstinately and without variation: the prolonged challenge to the "heart of the State" and to the organization of society will provoke an authoritarian counterattack and this, by means of a catalytic process, will in turn provoke a revolutionary civil war. The programmers of the "Italian civil war of the '80s" want to persuade as many as possible in the areas of recruitment, above all among the ultra-left theorizers and the militant base of the Italian CP, that things will inevitably go this way. They do not contemplate the hypothesis that after leaving terrorism behind there will be a dictatorship, and that will be that. Revolutionary subjectivism, which measures every individual act, does not measure all the conditions in which it operates, does not see a connection between means and ends in terms of logic, but rather responds to revulsions and feelings of irritation of the kind that Dostoevsky regarded as "passions of the mind" or "tragedies of imagined passion." Just as Guevara thought he was repeating the Long March of the Chinese revolutionaries in the mountains of Bolivia, so the guerrilla fighters of the Red Brigade believe that, confronted by their "metropolitan Long March" in the industrial triangle of Milan-Turin-Genoa, Italian society is not merely vulnerable but profoundly weak, and in any case cannot be lived in, like the burning building in Brecht's parable:

> I saw a house. It was burning. There were people inside. One of them, as the flames were scorching his eyelashes, asked if by chance it was raining outside, if the wind was blowing, and if there was another house, and so on. Without saying anything in reply, I left."

Translated from the Italian RAYMOND ROSENTHAL □

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Paul Blumberg

Another Day, Another $3,000: Executive Salaries in America

Some Are More Unequal than Others

In a society that extols its egalitarian tradition and during periodic bouts of national self-delusion even proclaims its essential classlessness, it might be instructive to examine the range of income inequality, as illustrated, for example, by the salaries of top corporate executives. To set these salaries in some perspective, I shall use as bench marks the income of the typical American worker as well as the level of officially defined poverty, so we can compare the average and low figures to the corporate heights.

In 1976, the median income of all full-time blue-collar working males was $12,500 before taxes.[1] In early autumn 1977, production workers with three dependents were taking home $174 a week. Allowing about 25 percent for rent or mortgage, the typical worker was left with $4.70 a day for each member of his family for food, clothing, transportation, recreation, medical care, insurance, phone, gas, electricity and miscellaneous expenses.[2] According to U.S. census figures for 1976, 25 million persons, equal to the combined population of Denmark, Sweden, Finland, Norway, and Israel, were living below what was conservatively considered the poverty line, $5,800 for a nonfarm family of four.[3]

As Scott Fitzgerald might have said, top corporate executives are different from you and me; yes, Hemingway might have replied, they make more money. But they are also very special in other respects. Clarence B. Randall, former chief executive of Inland Steel, explains:

> The senior officers in a corporation have a range of ethical questions which are peculiarly their own. The number-one man confronts a very special moral equation, for example, when it comes to fixing salaries for himself and the other executives. True, his board of directors must give *pro forma* approval to his recommendations, but it almost never challenges them. In actual fact, therefore, he himself is the one who decides what compensation he shall receive. This is a very tough spot for a man to be in. . . .[4]

Because boards of directors and compensation committees are normally rubber stamps when it comes to executive compensation—and occasionally even goad executives on—top executives are in a position, within very broad limits, to write their own ticket. Whether this is, as Clarence Randall suggests, an executive's dilemma, or, more likely, an executive's dream can be left to the corporate psychologists. More important is the way this "moral equation" is resolved.

In 1975, Meshulam Riklis, the chairman of

Many thanks to Dean Savage for good conversation and helpful suggestions.

[1]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Current Population Reports*, Series P-60, No. 107 (Advance Report), "Money Income and Poverty Status in the United States: 1976" (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1977), Table 7.

[2]U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *Monthly Labor Review*, October 1977, Table 20.

[3]U.S. Bureau of the Census, *loc. cit.*, Table 14.

[4]*The Executive in Transition* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), p. 130.

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Rapid-American Corp., earned (i.e., paid himself) a salary of $366,000. Every good worker deserves a bonus, however, and Mr. Riklis is no exception. His bonus that year was $550,000 for total direct compensation of $916,000.[5] Not far behind was the irrepressible chairman of ITT, Harold S. Geneen, whose salary in 1975 was $414,000 plus a bonus of $362,000, a total of $776,000. Geneen did better in 1976, however, earning $421,000 in salary and $425,000 in bonus, for a combined sum of $846,000. As modesty has never been Geneen's chief virtue, he replied on one occasion when questioned about his high salary, "Somebody recently commented that my objective is to be a million-dollar-a-year man. Wrong. I've set my eyes on a *much* higher figure. Maybe I'm worth $5 million a year."[6]

Auto executives typically rank at or near the top of corporate compensation; in recent years only in 1974 and 1975, when auto sales turned sharply downward, did salaries fall. Recently, however, auto executives have resumed their ascendant position. In 1976, Lee A. Iacocca, Ford president, earned a salary of $360,000 and a bonus of $610,000 for total direct compensation of $970,000. In the same year General Motors paid its chairman $325,000 plus a bonus of $625,000, a total of $950,000. Other handsomely paid executives in 1976 were the chairman of Norton Simon ($400,000 + $444,000 bonus), the chairman of ABC ($233,000 + $514,000), the chief executive of American Home Products, Inc. ($355,000 + $355,000), and the chairman of Mobil ($403,000 + $295,000).

Enormous bonus payments are not merely a compensation quirk of a few corporations. The number of companies paying bonuses has increased over the years, and in a study of more than 700 of the largest manufacturing firms in the country, the Conference Board found that by 1976 nearly 80 percent regularly paid an annual cash bonus to their executives. The larger the firm (in sales), the larger was the bonus, both absolutely and as a proportion of salary.[7]

Although I have cited some of the largest corporate salaries here, the compensation of top executives in almost all large corporations is extraordinary. Ralph Nader's Corporate Accountability Research Group found that the highest paid executive in each of the 50 largest industrial corporations in the United States averaged $400,000 in 1974.[8] The highest paid of these earn more in one nine-to-five air-conditioned day than most farm workers make in an entire year of toil. And this brings to mind Paul Samuelson's vivid metaphor:

> If we made an income pyramid out of a child's blocks, with each layer portraying $1,000 of income, the peak would be far higher than the Eiffel Tower, but almost all of us would be within a yard of the ground.[9]

What Did Berle Mean?

HIGH AS these salaries are, they are only the *beginning* of total executive compensation. Because of the traditionally high taxes on straight salary and bonus, corporations have shifted to other ingenious forms of compensation to help executives avoid the tax bite. Wilber G. Lewellen, probably the foremost academic specialist on executive compensation, has conducted a series of meticulous studies of the total compensation package since 1940 of the top five executives in 50 of the largest industrial corporations in the U.S., including the largest firms in auto, steel, chemicals, electrical equipment, petroleum, and other industries.[10] For the highest paid

[5]Top executive compensation is made public not because executives wish it—it was once a highly guarded corporate secret—but because the SEC requires it. Annual statistics are published in a number of places, most accessibly in *Forbes* and *Business Week* in May.

[6]Interview, *Forbes*, May 15, 1971, p. 187.

[7]Conference Board, *Top Executive Compensation* (1976 edition), Report No. 706, New York, 1976, chap. 2.

[8]Joel Seligman, "Executive Kremlin: Our Corporate Commissars," *Nation*, June 12, 1976, p. 711.

[9]*Economics*, 6th ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 113.

[10]See especially *Executive Compensation in Large Industrial Corporations* (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1968), and *The Ownership Income of Management* (New York: National Bureau of Economic Research, 1971).

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executive in each of these 50 firms, salary and bonus in the late 1960s comprised only 41 percent of total after-tax compensation, the remainder consisting of deferred compensation, profit-sharing, pensions, and, above all, stock options.[11]

In 1950 Congress amended the tax code, granting favorable tax treatment to executives who were rewarded with shares of their company's stock. According to a Senate report at the time, Congress offered preferential (i.e., long-term capital gains) treatment for stock options in order to "convert [corporate] officers into 'partners' by giving them a stake in the business" and to give to employees generally "a more direct interest in the success of the corporation."[12] Thus Congress set in motion the machinery that would ultimately make corporate managers significant part owners of their companies, and, in essence, lay to rest what little remained of the celebrated theory of the separation of ownership and management.

Top corporate executives indeed had owned company stock before this. But stock options, which first appeared in the 1920s, were not widely used until after Congress accorded them special tax treatment in 1950. Thereafter the stock option device not only helped to enrich many executives; it also minimized the tax that executives had to pay on enormous incomes, and it gave them a more substantial ownership interest in the firms they managed than ever before.

In its simplest terms, a stock-option grant is a right given to an executive to purchase a given amount of his company's stock, at some time in the future, at a price specified on the date the option is granted. Thus, an executive of, say, a large conglomerate, General Everything, is granted an option on January 15, 1978 to buy 10,000 shares of his company's stock at its market price on that day of $50 per share. If the executive exercises his option to purchase the stock two years later and its market price has risen to $75, this executive is able to buy the stock at the original option price of $50 per share. If, after purchase, he holds the stock for more than three years and complies with other routine IRS requirements, the earnings eventually realized on the sale of that stock will qualify for the long-term capital-gains tax rate. In the last generation this has proven a tremendous boon for executives: in the 1950s and 1960s, the maximum capital-gains tax rate was 25 percent while the maximum marginal rate on ordinary income ranged from 91 to 70 percent.

The sheer number of shares offered to executives on option is enormous. For example, in 1976 Citicorp gave chairman Walter B. Wriston options to buy 101,000 shares of company stock, the chairman of Norton Simon received an option grant of 100,000 shares, Union Pacific gave its chairman the option to purchase 50,000 shares of company stock, and the chairman of Texas Instruments received an option grant of 25,000 shares. Large option grants are especially popular when company stock prices are low, for potential gains are maximized later on when stock prices rise. Thus Chrysler, in trouble in 1974, losing $52 million, its stock price down, gave options to its three top executives totaling 150,000 shares.

Naturally, stock option grants of this magnitude have become a tremendous source of executive compensation, often dwarfing the executive's huge salary. For example, in 1975, the chairman of General Dynamics earned just $400,000 in salary and bonus. But in that year he exercised his option to buy General Dynamics stock. His option price for the stock was $2 million at a time when the current market price was $4.2 million, a paper gain in that year of over $2 million, five times his salary and bonus and probably taxable at the capital-gains rate. In 1976, the chairman of Dow Chemical earned $435,000 in salary and bonus, but bought Dow stock on option

[11]Wilber G. Lewellen, "Recent Evidence on Senior Executive Pay," *National Tax Journal*, June 1975, p. 164. I cite data from the late 1960s rather than the early 1970s because of the atypical bear market of the latter period.
[12]Cited in The Conference Board, *Qualified Stock Options for Executives*, Report No. 505, New York, 1970, p. 2.

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for $1.3 million when its market price was $2.5 million, for a potential gain of $1.2 million that year. In the same year, the chairman and president of United Technologies earned $650,000 in salary and bonus, but realized an additional $1 million in potential gains from his options on United Technologies stock. In 1972, the president of Texas Instruments earned less than $164,000 in salary and bonus. But he exercised his option to buy Texas Instruments stock, paying $2.7 million for stock that had a market price at that time of $5.9 million—a potential gain of over $3 million in that year alone.

Stock options on such a scale have more than monetary significance. Massive ownership of company stock by managers casts serious doubt on the theory, developed nearly a half-century ago by Adolph A. Berle and Gardiner C. Means, that in the modern corporation there has been a decisive split between ownership and management. Firmly in control and unencumbered by the constraints of ownership, modern management is allegedly free to direct corporate goals away from an exclusive concern with profits and toward broader economic and social objectives, such as corporate stability, public service, and community involvement. Anti-Marxists always found the theory quite congenial, for it allowed them to argue that the capitalism of Marx's day had been transformed into something far more civilized. As one ecstatic managerialist, Carl Kaysen, wrote some years ago:

> No longer the agent of proprietorship seeking to maximize return on investment, management sees itself as responsible to stockholders, employees, customers, the general public, and, perhaps most important, the firm itself as an institution . . . there is no display of greed or graspiness; there is no attempt to push off onto workers or the community at large part of the social costs of the enterprise. The modern corporation is a soulful corporation.[13]

In terms of the economic realities of contemporary management, this theory makes very little sense, for the ownership interest of managers today—and hence their inevitable concern for profits—is immense. For example, in his study of 50 large manufacturing corporations, Lewellen found that oyer the last generation the proportion of top executive income based on stock rewards has increased tremendously. While in the 1940s only 5 percent or less of top executives' after-tax income derived from stock-related rewards, by the late 1960s, stock-based rewards comprised fully 46 percent of after-tax compensation.[14]

Even more significant, Lewellen found that by the early 1960s the after-tax income of chief executives that was derived from all forms of ownership of the company—capital gains, dividends, as well as other stock-based remuneration—was on the average 6½ times higher than their compensation in salary, bonus, and other compensation based on their management of the company.[15] Deleting from his sample such companies as IBM, du Pont, Firestone, and General Tire, where there is a family owner-manager tradition or where inherited wealth plays a role in management, we find that the remaining managers in Lewellen's study earned three times more from their ownership interest in the company than from their salaries, bonuses, and the like. This represents an immense increase of ownership interest since the 1940s, when the ownership income of the top executives in Lewellen's sample was only 80 percent of salaries, bonuses, etc.

The result of all this has been an extraordinary recent accumulation of stock ownership by management. By the early 1960s, the top executive in each of the companies Lewellen studied owned an average of $2.6 million of his company's stock.[16] Excluding again those firms where

[13]Carl Kaysen, "The Social Significance of the Modern Corporation," *American Economic Review*, May 1957, pp. 313-14, quoted in Samuel Norich, "Managerial Theory and the Profit Performance of the Leading U.S. Industrial Corporations," (paper presented at the meetings of the American Sociological Association, New York, August 1976), p. 4.

[14]"Recent Evidence on Senior Executive Pay," p. 167.

[15]*The Ownership Income of Management*, p. 89.

[16]*Ibid.*, p. 105.

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inherited wealth is a factor, each of the remaining top managers owned an average of more than $1.1 million of his company's stock. More recently, Nader's corporate research group found that in 1974 the 43 highest paid chief executives in American industrial corporations who had not founded their firm nor inherited stock in it each owned an average of over $1.5 million of their company's stock.[17]

While management's Gargantuan ownership interest ought to put the coup de grâce to Berle and Means's venerable theory, economists persist in playing the same old games, asking themselves and each other in articles in which they carefully lose the forest for the trees whether corporate executives really do have a strong personal interest in the financial success of their firms.[18] Yet any schoolboy could properly conclude that if a man owns a million-and-a-half dollars of his company's stock and earns three times more from his ownership of the firm than from his management of it, it is a fair presumption he will work to make his company profitable. But every occupation has its make-work practices, so why not economics?

Risk and Reward

THE ONE towering irony about executive compensation in this country is its complete violation of one of the central ideological pillars of capitalism, the principle of *risk*. It is one of the system's hoariest beliefs that high profits and high income are fully justified for those courageous enough to risk it all in the uncertainties of the marketplace. Yet, while high income is seen as the just reward of high risk, corporate executives have hired hordes of management consultants, compensation specialists, actuaries, tax experts, and financial counsellors to help them remove any possibility of risk that might jeopardize their extraordinary income.

The stock option itself symbolizes the principle of risk minimization. When ordinary investors buy stock they take substantial risks, for they have no idea whether the value of that stock will increase or decrease over time. A stock option, however, permits an executive to minimize risk by allowing him to look down the road several years, watch the price movement on his stock, and decide on that basis whether or not to buy. If the stock price falls after an option has been granted, the executive avoids loss by merely declining to exercise his option. But, while he takes no risk, he also does not make any money. Some corporations, therefore, have decided to reduce the profitlessness of a falling market by simply "recycling" their executive stock options. Early in 1974, for example, Gulf Oil granted its top executives options to buy some 760,00 shares of Gulf stock at $21.75 each. But because the market fell during the year, Gulf simply withdrew the options later that year and in their place issued 715,000 new ones at $17.81.

However, stock options, even recycled ones, do entail some inconvenience. In exercising most options, the executive must purchase the stock that can involve an enormous expenditure of funds. Consequently, many companies have relieved their executives of this burdensome financial outlay by granting them low-cost (or no-cost) loans, or by arranging bank loans, usually at the company's own bank, and guaranteeing them. In one study of major corporations, *Dun's* found that more than 10 percent of the executives responding to the survey reported that they had received loans from their company.[19] Gulf & Western, R. J. Reynolds, Allied Chemical, Champion International, Squibb, and many others had executive loan programs, mainly for financing the purchase of stock bought on option, but also for paying taxes on the stock purchased and to finance homes, life insurance policies, college tuition, and other major executive expenses. Many companies do not report executive loans to their shareholders in proxy statements because state and federal laws on disclosure are fuzzy. Nonetheless, as the amount of stock

[17]Seligman, "Executive Kremlin," p. 711.

[18]See, e.g., David H. Ciscel, "Determinants of Executive Compensation," *Southern Economic Journal,* April 1974, pp. 613-17.

[19]John C. Perham, "Those Controversial Executive Loans," *Dun's Review*, October 1974, pp. 57-61.

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an executive can buy on option may be very costly, loans to executives can run into hundreds of thousands, even millions of dollars. For example, in 1970 the chairman of Norton Simon borrowed money from his company to help him buy 75,000 shares of company stock, worth over $2.3 million at the time. The loan was given at 4 percent, a typical rate for executive loans in the early 1970s, and was more than covered by the dividends on his shares.

Some executives are so used to getting a free ride from their companies that one compensation expert has argued that a disadvantage of company loans is that often managers simply "look on the money as theirs, without strings," and the company has trouble obtaining repayment.[20] But the executive's presumptions are sometimes accurate. According to one report, "In 1969 Xerox sold key executives large blocks of restricted Class B stock at half the market price. It also lent each man the full purchase price, at 4 percent. No repayment of principal is required until the executive dies, retires, quits, or goes bankrupt, something few Xerox executives ever do."[21]

Actually, the major benefit of many genuine loans to finance options is not the low- or no-interest rate but the complete freedom from risk. For example, if an executive borrows to buy his company's stock at $60 per share and the stock goes "under water," i.e., the market price falls below the executive's option price, according to the provisions of a special "non-recourse" loan, the executive can simply ask the company to bail him out. By the terms of this fail-safe plan, the company buys the stock back at the original option price and the executive's debt is canceled. As one compensation specialist described it, "When the stock plunges, the executive can simply say, 'I don't want to play this game any more.' Then he turns his shares back to the company, the loan is wiped out and the transaction closed."[22]

While ordinary low-interest company loans for stock purchases are convenient, their one disadvantage is that the executive must incur tremendous indebtedness. To remedy this, compensation specialists have devised plans that eliminate the need for any executive financing whatsoever. With the gimmick known as stock appreciation rights (SARs), the stock option device becomes just a matter of bookkeeping. Instead of actually buying stock, the executive merely collects money or shares from the company equal to the appreciation he would have realized on the stock had he actually purchased it. With ordinary options, the executive must buy and pay for the stock, pay the taxes immediately on his potential gain if the option does not satisfy IRS rules for long-term capital gains, and take the chance that the market price of his stock will go under water after he purchases it. With stock appreciation rights the executive is spared all these headaches, yet he reaps the same appreciation rewards as if he had actually purchased the stock. Although relatively new on the compensation scene, SARs seem ideally suited to the principle of maximum gain with minimum risk, and by 1977, of the 200 industrial corporations 80 had adopted SARs for their executives.

Phantom stock plans are similar to SARs, giving executives "units" equivalent to company stock, and the executive ultimately collects dividends on his imaginary stock, the appreciation of that stock, and/or the stock itself. In many of these plans, the executive can choose whether he wants his payments from the phantom stock all at once or spread over a long period. As one ITT official said, explaining the occasional urgency of executive needs, "If the recipient has a specific reason to want it in a lump sum—to buy an island off the Florida coast or something—he can tell us and the compensation committee, which has the final say, may agree."[24]

[20]James E. Cheeks, *How to Compensate Executives* (Homewood, Ill.: Dow Jones-Irwin, Inc., 1974), p. 215.
[21]Perham, "Those Controversial Executive Loans," p. 68.
[22]*Ibid.*, p. 58.
[23]Frederic W. Cook, "Stock Appreciation Rights: A Research Report," *Compensation Review*, 9 (1st Quarter 1977), pp. 63-4; John C. Perham, "The Changing Compensation Package, *Dun's Review*, September 1977, pp. 50-52.
[24]John C. Perham, "Phantom Stock: Better than Options?" *Dun's Review*, September 1970, p. 89.

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Like SARs, phantom stock plans are becoming more attractive because the executive risks none of his own money and never has to worry about financing the purchase of large blocks of stock. In the Conference Board's 1976 survey, 29 percent of large manufacturing corporations (sales over $3 billion) had phantom stock plans for their executives.[25]

While large executive salaries, bonuses, and regular stock options may inspire a stockholders' revolt, a singular advantage of SARs and phantom plans is that they are often so complex they confuse shareholders. One compensation specialist writes: ". . . by its very nature, phantom stock does not arouse the controversy of bonuses or much-touted options. The complex details of a phantom plan are usually set forth in small type—and even smaller footnotes—toward the back of the proxy statement."[26] It is also possible to disguise exactly who is getting what by listing the award of phantom shares to groups of executives, rather than to individuals, by omitting the monetary value of the phantom units, and then relegating the whole thing, to "minuscule footnotes," which "most shareholders don't read . . . and don't understand . . . if they do."[27] As one delighted management consultant said of du Pont's system of phantom stock awards, "du Pont has found a simply fantastic way to bury executive compensation."[28]

Only a few years ago, many writers on the compensation scene predicted an early death for the executive stock option. First, the 1969 Tax Reform Act reduced the tax advantages on stock options and narrowed the tax gap between gains from options and ordinary income.[29] The maximum marginal rate on earned income fell from 70 percent to 50 percent, while the maximum tax on capital gains income (over $50,000) rose from about 25 percent to 35 percent or even more in some cases. Second, the bear markets of the 1970s made options far less profitable for most executives than they had been in previous periods of continually rising stock prices. Nevertheless, just as in earlier periods of market downturns and increased taxation, stock options weathered the storm. Of the more than 700 manufacturing corporations studied by the Conference Board in 1976, 86 percent continued to award stock options to their executives, down only slightly from 91 percent in 1970.[30]

In an apparent paradox, as stock options have become taxed more heavily in recent years, executives have switched from qualified stock options (i.e., options that qualify for favorable tax treatment) to nonqualified options. The reason is that, while qualified options are taxed at the capital-gains rate, they must conform to certain IRS regulations that may limit an executive's pecuniary gain. For example, a qualified option must be exercised within five years after it is granted, thus possibly limiting the "spread"—i.e., the difference between the price the executive pays for the stock and the stock's market price at the time he buys it. Also, the executive's price for stock bought on a qualified option can be no lower than the market price on the date he was granted the option. Moreover, stock purchased on qualified options must be held for three years or more before it is sold if the entire gain is to be taxed at the lower rate. After the executive purchases his stock, this requirement increases the possibility that the market may decline before he can dispose of it.

Although nonqualified options are taxable at higher rates than qualified options, they carry none of the latter's restrictions, thus gaining in flexibility and potential for gain what they lose in tax benefits. As the tax difference between capital gains and other

[25] *Top Executive Compensation,*, p. 11.

[26] Perham, "Phantom Stock," p. 33.

[27] *Ibid.*

[28] *Ibid.*, p. 34.

[29] Ironically, the Tax "Reform" Act of 1969 did more to increase the pay of top executives than anything in recent years. By reducing the maximum marginal rate on earned income from 70 percent to 50 percent, the after-tax income of the highest-paid executives in Lewellen's sample of 50 major manufacturing corporations increased 64 percent from 1969 to 1973, a greater percentage increase than in the previous thirty years! (See "Recent Evidence," p. 161.)

[30] *Top Executive Compensation,* p. 5.

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income has been substantially reduced since 1969, executives are finding it profitable to shift over to nonqualified options. In 1970, only 9 percent of the 700 manufacturing corporations surveyed by the Conference Board offered nonqualified options to their executives; by 1976 the figure had increased to 65 percent.[31]

Although stock options are still alive and relatively well in the executive suite, the recent feeble performance of the stock market is inevitably taking its toll. Stock options are obviously most profitable in a bull market, for rising stock prices guarantee a continuously profitable distance between what the executive pays for his stock and what he eventually gets for it when he sells. The period from 1950 to 1961, when the Dow Jones industrial average rose from about 200 to 700, was clearly ideal for options. A market that alternately rises and falls can also be good for options, as companies can grant options to their executives when stock prices are low, and executives can sell when prices rise. However, in a long period of stagnating or slowly falling stock prices, such as the present, stock options cannot be counted on to provide the large, risk-free income to which executives have become accustomed.

Necessity has therefore mothered at least one ingenious invention designed virtually to guarantee executives rising prices on their company's stock even while the actual market price may be declining. During one period of the bear market of the early 1970s, the stock of Corning Glass fell sharply, from $72 to $47 per share. The company thereupon adopted a compensation plan that protected their executives from the vicissitudes of share prices, even though ordinary shareholders were losing heavily. Under the plan, Corning executives are allowed to buy shares of company stock at its *book value*. They receive dividends on their shares and can eventually sell the stock back at the new book value per share. Unlike market value, the book value of a company's stock—basically assets minus liabilities—almost never declines and in most established companies increases steadily though not spectacularly. In the bear market of the last few years, ITT, W. R. Grace, Citicorp, Green Giant, and other companies have adopted similar risk-free plans, ironically permitting executives to profit from their company's stock while the firm's regular investors may be taking losses. Even in adversity, the principle of risk minimization is triumphant.[32]

Salary, bonus, options, stock purchase plans—all this does not yet exhaust the variety of executive compensation. Add also profit-sharing plans, savings and investment plans, long-term incentive plans, performance shares (essentially piece rates in six digits), deferred compensation, and handsome pensions. But even this is not the end, for the number and variety of executive fringe benefits is extraordinary. In the panoply of perquisites top executives enjoy are: financial counseling, tax and legal assistance, company automobile and chauffeur services (for business and sometimes personal use), company-provided planes, boats, and apartments (for business and sometimes personal use), company-paid or subsidized travel, recreation facilities, club memberships, liberal expense accounts, personal use of business credit cards, thorough physical examinations, complete medical coverage, including in-patient, out-patient, home health care, dental, and psychiatric care—all without any outlays by the executive—"educational benefit trusts," i.e., college expenses for children, "social-service sabbaticals," and the best and most complete form of disability, accident, and life insurance. In short, as Michael Harrington is fond of saying, the system provides socialism for the rich and capitalism for the rest of us.

The systematic minimization of risk extends into the executive's retirement years, a period that for most Americans is fraught with insecurity. The Conference Board

[31] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[32] Roger Ricklefs, "Stock Options' Allure Fades, So Firms Seek Different Incentives," *Wall Street Journal*, May 27, 1975; cf. Frederic W. Cook, "Book-Value Stock As an Employee Stock Ownership and Incentive Device," *Compensation Review*, 9 (3rd Quarter 1977), pp. 11-19.

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surveyed some 1,100 large companies in 1976 and found that the median annual pension of the three highest paid executives after age 65 was $38,400.[33] Among the several hundred manufacturing corporations in the sample, the median pension was $48,300, or nearly four times the full-time year-round income of the average American man in 1976. Moreover, in 20 percent of the manufacturing firms executive pensions exceeded $80,000 annually. Note, however, that as salary is just a fraction of total income for working executives, so pensions are just a fraction of total income for retired executives. Besides these pensions, retired executives can look forward to deferred compensation accumulated during their working years, stock options, employment contracts (consultantships), and, for pin money, social security. Of these generous pensions and other post-retirement executive income, Harland Fox of the Conference Board writes that this just goes to prove that "American companies still do take care of their own—top management, that is."[34]

Ideology

WHAT JUSTIFICATION is there for executive compensation on this scale, a magnitude that led one economist to call it a form of "legal embezzlement"?[35] The rationale most frequently invoked in management circles is that these rewards are essential in order to "attract, motivate, and retain" competent executive personnel. Management must occasionally parade this ideology before angry shareholders who, although not exactly egalitarians themselves, see in high executive compensation a threat to their own financial interests.

At the 1970 General Motors stockholders' meeting, for example, Lewis and John Gilbert, well-known corporate gadflies, introduced a motion to limit total compensation to any GM executive to $350,000 annually. This or similar proposals had been introduced at eight previous GM meetings and had been defeated at each by a total of 93-96 percent of total shares voted, no surprise if one considers management's domination of the proxy machinery. GM's salary committee once again successfully urged defeat of the motion. In defense of its compensation policy, GM argued that high salaries for top executives were virtually a necessity in an organization as large and complex as General Motors. If you begin at the bottom of the white-collar ladder with reasonable compensation for employees there, and provide financial incentives for movement upward to each successive level, you inevitably reach the six- or even seven-figure mark by the time you reach the top of the corporate hierarchy. GM explains the consequences of tampering with this natural order.

> . . . an effective executive compensation policy must . . . provide meaningful differentials between levels of responsibility in order to encourage employees to seek greater responsibilities . . . It is apparent that a drastic reduction in compensation for the Chief Executive Officer and the Chief Operating Officer and other important executives of General Motors would have a depressing effect on the entire organization. In order to preserve proper differentials, such a reduction would force changes in compensation at all levels of management thereby increasing the possibility of losing valuable management talent. This would obviously not be in the best interests of the Corporation or its stockholders.

Thus, not executive avarice but functional necessity dictates these opulent salaries. But even if it is granted that some income differentials are necessary in an organization to provide work incentives, the question remains whether the degree of inequality need be so great. The answer is obviously no. There are countless bureaucratic organizations, many of them exceedingly large and complex, where the ratio of top to average income is not on the order of 100:1, as in many industrial corporations, and yet the work is done and the

[33] Harland Fox, "Security, Uppercrust, U.S.," *Across the Board,* March 1977, pp. 36-38.

[34] *Ibid.*, p. 38.

[35] Robert A. Gordon, quoted in Gerhard Lenski, *Power and Privilege* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1966), p. 355.

[36] Lenski makes a similar argument in *Power and Privilege*, pp. 352-61.

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employees are sufficiently motivated.[36] Chief executive officers (CEOs) of the nation's largest utilities, for example, earn substantially less than their counterparts in industry. In their survey of executive compensation in 1976, the Conference Board found that the median salary of CEOs in utilities was only about half of those in manufacturing. Also, just 8 percent of the large utilities granted executive bonuses compared to 78 percent in manufacturing; and only 14 percent of the utilities had stock-option plans for their executives compared to 86 percent in manufacturing.[37]

In the mid-1960s, the total before-tax remuneration of full-time directors of Britain's four largest nationalized industries ranged from only £8,000 to £12,000, a pittance compared to salaries in comparable U.S. private industry and small also in comparison with British private enterprise.[38]

A study by the U.S. Civil Service Commission found that the highest paid federal civil-service employees, at the GS-18 level, earned an average of $36,000 in 1975, while comparable employees in private industry were paid an average of $71,000, plus another $23,000 in bonuses.[39]

The highest ranking official in the U.S. government, presiding over a federal bureaucracy of nearly 3 million persons and a budget of nearly $500 billion, earns only $200,000 annually, less than one quarter of what some top executives earn. While the U.S. president obviously enjoys rewards of power and status besides his salary, there is virtually no other public official at any level of government—including senators, congressmen, cabinet officers, judges, governors, state legislators, mayors, city managers—whose income even approaches six figures.

The U.S. military, certainly larger and more bureaucratic than even General Motors, involving millions of men and tens of billions of dollars, pays its four-star generals and admirals with a quarter-century of service in uniform less than $46,000 annually (net income in 1975).

What these bureaucracies have in common—public utilities, nationalized industry, government, and the military—is that in all of them there is some public regulation and public control. And where the public exercises even nominal supervision, income distribution is always more equitable than where the public is excluded. The point cannot be emphasized too strongly: what is crucial about the enormous executive salaries I have examined here is their *political*, rather than their economic, significance. For these immense salaries signify that there is no countervailing force, either within the corporation (boards, stockholders, workers) or in society at large (Congress, the courts, consumer groups), which is capable of bringing them into line with the more equitable standards of income distribution that prevail when influenced by public policy. These prodigious executive salaries are a measure of corporate power and autonomy from public control; they are simply quantitative symbols of corporate autocracy.

But others have offered alternate explanations for these high salaries. According to the prevailing wisdom of the school of functionalism in American sociology, those occupations must receive the highest rewards that "have the greatest importance for society."[40] In other words, those positions that are crucial for the proper functioning and survival of society must necessarily be rewarded best. How ironically significant a comment it is on the relevance of social science to the real social world that the highest paid American corporate executive in modern times was Michel C. Bergerac who in 1974 received a salary and bonus of $1,595,000, plus a stock option grant of 70,000 shares for his service as president of . . . Revlon. Tobacco executives are also handsomely paid men

[37] *Top Executive Compensation*, pp. 4, 5, 8, 52.

[38] A. J. Merrett and D. A. G. Monk, *Inflation, Taxation and Executive Remuneration* (London: Hallam Press Ltd., 1967), p. 45.

[39] *Compensation Review*, 7 (3rd Quarter 1975), p. 5.

[40] Kingsley Davis and Wilbert E. Moore, "Some Principles of Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, April 1945, pp. 242-49 and reprinted dozens of times as a modern sociological classic.

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whose contribution to the health and survival of American society and its citizens we are all familiar with. In 1975, the chairman of Philip Morris earned $407,000 plus about $270,000 on stock options, and a year later the president of R. J. Reynolds earned $450,000 in addition to a stock option grant of 27,000 shares and potential gains on options exercised of $150,000.[41]

In another ironic twist regarding the theory of the "functional importance" of highly paid executives, on at least one occasion top corporate executives unwittingly testified to their own supreme dispensability. In 1956, during the height of the cold war, the Air Force's Rand Corporation interviewed top executives from 37 of the country's largest corporations seeking their opinion on whether their companies would be able to continue production if an atomic attack on the U.S. vaporized corporate headquarters and the top executives themselves. Most of the executives testified that, although operations might be difficult or inconvenient for a time, production could continue and the company could function adequately without them.[42]

An old-fashioned conservative argument holds that the high income of some works no substantial injustice on the rest. If the salaries of top corporate officials were appropriated and distributed, say, to the poor, each family would get only a few dollars. But this argument misses the moral issue of what such a maldistribution of income says about our aspirations for a more just and equal society. Is there not something that jars the sensibilities about some persons accumulating more money than they or their families could ever reasonably need or spend, while at least 25 million Americans remain ill-housed, ill-fed and ill-clothed?

The moral issue aside, the high salaries of some do indeed work substantial injustice on the rest. The average income of all American families in 1976 was about $17,000. The rich earned considerably more, the poor considerably less. But if everyone were to put his income into a common pile, there would be enough for each family to draw the average, $17,000, thus eliminating poverty and assuring a modest but adequate income for all. One needn't be a dogmatic egalitarian to realize that income distribution is indeed a zero-sum game, and that the affluence of some does in fact result in the poverty of others. While complete equality of income is probably both unrealizable and undesirable, one could easily devise a redistribution scheme that would maintain modest financial increments for purposes of work incentives, while guaranteeing that no family would fall below the poverty line.

As maldistributed as income is in this country, it is important to recall that wealth is far more highly concentrated even than income. While the top 1 percent of income earners account for about 7-8 percent of all income, the top 1 percent of wealth-holders own 50 percent of all privately held stock, 36 percent of all bonds, and about a quarter of total assets. The case of William S. Paley, a wealth-holder, aptly illustrates that there is a greater concentration of wealth than of income. In 1976, his last full year as chief executive at CBS, Paley's income from salary was $500,000, an enormous sum by the standards of most American families. Yet Paley's wealth—in the form of 1.7 million shares of CBS stock worth $90 million on today's market and yielding nearly $3 million in dividends every year—dwarfs even his gigantic income. When we speak of the "ordinary" top manager with immense income, we speak of the rich but not of the richest; those with inherited wealth still have one up on those with merely high income.

[41]For a discussion of executive salaries and functional theory in sociology, see Leonard Broom and Robert G. Cushing, "A Modest Test of an Immodest Theory: the Functional Theory of Stratification," *American Sociological Review*, February 1977, pp. 157-69.

[42]Margaret Bright Rowan and Harry V. Kincaid, *The Views of Corporation Executives on the Probable Effect of the Loss of Company Headquarters in Wartime* (New York: The Rand Corporation, Bureau of Applied Social Research, Columbia University, 1956), RM-1723. I am grateful to Dean Savage who rediscovered this study and suggested its relevance here.

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Roots

BUT JUST WHO are these prodigiously paid executives? In their personal background and characteristics do they reflect the diversity of the American population? Has their composition been altered by the civil rights struggles of the 1960s, the women's movement, the equality revolution in general that sought to break down barriers of exclusiveness based on race, sex, and class, and to democratize access to the desirable positions in American life?

A recent study of the social background of 450 top executives from 250 of America's largest corporations answers all these questions in the negative.[43] The executive suite today is full of the same old faces. They are all men, all white, nearly all from upper- or upper-middle-class families, are overwhelmingly Protestant (85 percent) and mainly Episcopal and Presbyterian, nearly all college-educated, with Harvard, Yale, MIT, and Columbia the most frequently attended schools, and almost all Republicans. In short, top management has been virtually untouched by any of the movements toward equality of the last decade and a half, and the executive suite remains one of the most highly segregated sanctuaries in the land.

Democracy

THE ECONOMIC STAGNATION of American capitalism in the 1970s was preceded by its moral stagnation in the 1960s. In a healthy capitalist society, one whose ideology is firmly intact, an individual who earns an astronomical salary is likely to bear his distinction proudly. Is it then not a sign of the times that in 1977 when *Business Week* magazine, in its annual survey of executive compensation, announced that the chairman of United Technologies was the highest paid executive in America, the company immediately issued all manner of qualifications, disclaimers, smoke screens, and denials, as if their chief executive had been stigmatized rather than honored.

In a sense, this was correct. The legitimacy of the system has been undermined to such an extent that those who reap its greatest rewards are as likely to be criticized as applauded. The number and volume of stockholders' protests against high executive compensation is increasing year by year. At the 1977 Chrysler stockholders' meeting, for instance, a small stockholders' resolution to limit executive bonuses and stock options gained an amazing 20 percent of the total vote, and shareholders lawsuits in 1977 against Norton Simon, Inc. and Rapid-American Corp. forced top executive compensation down.

Even friendly insiders are warning that the greed of top executives may eventually kill the goose that lays the golden egg. Writing in the *Harvard Business Review,* a long-time compensation consultant and friend of management argues that outrageous executive compensation may be creating a new "privileged class" that could undermine public support for the system—and he urges corporations to put their own house in order and reduce executive income to reasonable levels before the public decides to do it for them.[44]

The democratization of corporate governance may not yet be an idea whose time has come, but this is surely an idea whose time is coming. As measured by periodic Harris polls, public trust of business is probably at an all-time low, aggravated by Watergate and other revelations of illegal activities at home and bribery abroad. Shareholders' anger rises at avaricious executives, and public-interest and consumer groups grow aware that the trusts cannot be busted and so must be democratized. The idea of economic democracy is sweeping Europe in innumerable forms of workers' participation, control, and codetermination, and in the more radical wing of the work humanization movement in this country the idea is finding fertile ground. One thing is sure: however it comes and whatever form it takes, the democratization of corporate governance will end once and for all the moral anarchy of executive compensation as it exists today. □

[43]Frederick D. Sturdivant and Roy D. Adler, "Executive Origins: Still a Gray Flannel World?" *Harvard Business Review,* November-December 1976, pp. 125-32.

[44]John C. Baker, "Are Corporate Executives Overpaid?" *Harvard Business Review*, July-August 1977, pp. 51-56.

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Danilo Kiš

The Sow That Eats Her Own Farrow

The Land of Eternity

The first act of the tragedy, or comedy (in the scholastic sense of the word), whose main character is a certain Gould Verschoyle, begins as all earthly tragedies do: with birth. The rejected positivist formula of milieu and race can be applied to human beings to the same degree as to Flemish art. Thus the first act of the tragedy begins in Ireland, "the ultima Thule, the land on the other side of knowledge," as one of Dedalus's doubles calls it; in Ireland, "the land of sadness, hunger, despair, and violence," according to another explorer, who is less inclined to myth and more to laborious earthy prose. However, in him too a certain lyrical quality is not in harmony with the cruelty of the region: "The ultimate step of the sunset, Ireland is the last land to see the fading of the day. Night has already fallen on Europe while the slanting rays of the sun still purple the fjords and wastelands in the West. But let the dark clouds form, let a star fall, and suddenly the island again becomes as in a legend that distant place covered with fog and darkness, which for so long marked the boundary of the known world to navigators. And on the other side is a break: the dark sea in which the dead once found their land of eternity. Their black ships on shores with strange names testify to a time when travel had something metaphysical about it: they summon up dreams without shores, without return."

Excerpted from *A Tomb for Boris Davidovich*, by Danilo Kiš. English translation, by Duška Mikić-Mitchell, copyright ©1978 by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Inc. To be published by Harcourt Brace Jovanovich.

The Eccentrics

Dublin is a city that breeds a menagerie of eccentrics, the most notorious in the whole Western world: nobly disappointed, aggressive bohemians, professors in redingotes, superfluous prostitutes, infamous drunkards, tattered prophets, fanatical revolutionaries, sick nationalists, flaming anarchists, widows decked out in combs and jewelry, hooded priests. All day long this carnivalesque cohort parades along the Liffey. In the absence of more reliable sources, Bourniquel's picture of Dublin enables us to get a sense of the experience Gould Verschoyle would inevitably take with him from the island, an experience that is drawn into the soul just as the terrible stench of fish meal from the cannery near the harbor is drawn into the lungs.

With a certain rash anticipation, we would be inclined to view this carnivalesque cohort as the last image our hero would see in a rapid succession of images: the noble menagerie of Irish eccentrics (to which, in some ways, he also belonged) descending along the Liffey all the way down to the anchorage, and disappearing as if into hell.

The Black Marsh

Gould Verschoyle was born in one such suburb of Dublin within reach of the harbor, where he listened to ships' whistles, that piercing howl which tells the righteous young heart that there are worlds and nations outside "Dubh-linn," this black marsh in which the stench and injustice are more

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heavily oppressive than anywhere else. Following the example of his father—who rose from bribe-taking customs official to even more wretched (in the moral sense) bureaucrat, and from passionate Parnellite to bootlicker and puritan—Gould Verschoyle acquired a revulsion for his native land, which is only one of the guises of perverted and masochistic patriotism. "The cracked looking glass of a servant, the sow that eats her farrow"—at nineteen Verschoyle wrote this cruel sentence, which referred more to Ireland than to his parents.

Wearied by the vain prattle in dark pubs where conspiracies and assassinations were plotted by phony priests, poets, and traitors, Gould Verschoyle wrote in his journal the sentence spoken by a certain tall nearsighted student, without foreseeing the tragic consequence that these words would have: "Anyone with any self-respect cannot bear to remain in Ireland and must go into exile, fleeing the country struck by the wrathful hand of Jupiter."

This was written in the entry for May 19, 1935.

In August of the same year he boarded a merchant ship, the *Ringsend*, which was sailing for Morocco. After a three-day stopover in Marseilles, the *Ringsend* sailed without one of its crew; or, to be exact, the place of the radio operator Verschoyle was filled by a newcomer. In February 1936 we find Gould Verschoyle near Guadalajara in the 15th Anglo-American Brigade bearing the name of the legendary Lincoln. Verschoyle was then twenty-eight years old.

Faded Photographs

Here the reliability of the documents, resembling, as they do, palimpsests, is suspended for a moment. The life of Gould Verschoyle blends and merges with the life and death of the young Spanish Republic. We have only two snapshots. One, with an unknown soldier next to the ruins of a shrine. On the back, in Verschoyle's handwriting: "Alcázar. Viva la República." His high forehead is half covered by a Basque beret, a smile hovers around his lips, on which one can read (from today's perspective) the triumph of the victor and the bitterness of the defeated: the paradoxical reflections that, like a line on the forehead, foreshadow inevitable death. Also, a group snapshot with the date November 5, 1936. The picture is blurred. Verschoyle is in the second row, still with a Basque beret pulled over his forehead. In front of the lined-up group a landscape stretches out, and it would not be hard to believe that we are in a cemetery. Is this the Honor Guard that fired salvos into the sky or into living flesh? The face of Gould Verschoyle jealously guards this secret. Over the rows of soldiers' heads, in the distant blue an airplane hovers like a crucifix.

Cautious Speculations

I see Verschoyle retreating from Málaga on foot, in the leather coat he took from a dead Falangist (under the coat there was only the thin, naked body and a silver cross on a leather string); I see him charging toward a bayonet, carried along by his own war cry as if by the wings of the exterminating angel; I see him in a shouting contest with Anarchists, whose black flag is raised on the bare hills near Guadalajara, and who are ready to die a noble, senseless death; I see him under the red-hot sky by a cemetery near Bilbao, listening to lectures in which, as at the Creation, life and death, heaven and earth, freedom and tyranny are fixed within boundaries; I see him discharging a clip of bullets into the air at planes, impotent, felled right afterward by fire, earth, and shrapnel; I see him shaking the dead body of the student Armand Joffroy, who died in his arms somewhere near Santander; I see him, his head wrapped in filthy bandages, lying in an improvised hospital near Gijón, listening to the ravings of the wounded, one of whom is calling on God in Irish; I see him talking with a young nurse who lulls him to sleep like a child, singing in a tongue unknown to him, and later he, half asleep and full of morphine, sees her climbing into the bed of a Pole who has had a leg amputated, and soon thereafter he hears, as in

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a nightmare, her aching love rattle; I see him somewhere in Catalonia, at the improvised battalion headquarters, sitting in front of the telegraph, repeating desperate calls for help while a radio in the nearby cemetery plays the gay and suicidal songs of the Anarchists; I see him suffering from conjunctivitis and diarrhea, and I see him naked to the waist, shaving by a well of poisoned water.

Between Acts

In late May 1937, somewhere in the suburbs of Barcelona, Verschoyle requested to see the battalion commander. The commander, just past forty, looked like a well-preserved old man. Bent over his desk, he was signing death sentences. His aide, buttoned up to his neck and wearing shiny hunting boots, stood beside him and was pressing a blotter after each signature. The room was stuffy. The commander wiped his face with a batiste handkerchief. Rhythmical explosions of heavy-caliber grenades were heard in the distance. The commander motioned to Verschoyle to speak. "Coded messages are getting into the wrong hands," said Verschoyle. "Whose?" asked the commander somewhat absentmindedly. The Irishman hesitated, suspiciously glancing at the aide. The commander then adopted the vocabulary of Verdun: "Speak up, son. Into whose hands?" The Irishman was silent for a moment, then bent over the desk and whispered something into the commander's ear. The commander rose, approached Verschoyle, and accompanied him to the door, all the while patting him on the shoulder the way recruits and dreamers are patted. That was all.

A Call for Travel

Verschoyle spent the hellish night between May 31 and June 1 in front of the Morse telegraph, sending stern messages to the forward positions over toward the mountains of Almería. The night was muggy and illuminated by rockets, which made the region look unreal. Just before dawn Verschoyle handed the telegraph over to a young Basque. The Irishman walked ten paces into the woods and, exhausted, lay face down on the damp grass.

He was awakened by a messenger from headquarters. Verschoyle first glanced at the sky, then at his watch; he hadn't slept more than forty minutes. The messenger gave him an order in a tone unbefitting his rank: there was a ship in the harbor whose radio didn't work—it must be repaired; when the job was finished, a report should be submitted to the second-in-command; *Viva la República!* Verschoyle rushed into the tent, picked up the leather bag with his tools, and set off with the messenger to the harbor. During the night, someone had written a victorious slogan with white paint, still dripping, on the door of the customhouse: VIVA LA MUERTE. On the open sea far from the dock, a silhouette of a ship was outlined through the morning fog. The messenger and the sailors in the rowboat exchanged unnecessary passwords. Verschoyle got into the rowboat without looking back.

The Brass-Plated Door

Charred timbers floated everywhere, remnants of a ship torpedoed during the night. Verschoyle watched the ashen sea, and this reminded him of scorned and scornworthy Ireland. (Even so, we cannot believe that there wasn't a touch of nostalgia in this scorn.) His traveling companions were silent, busy with their heavy oars. Soon they approached the ship, and Verschoyle noticed that they were being watched from the upper deck; the helmsman had handed a pair of binoculars to the captain.

Here follow some technical details, perhaps unimportant to the story. The ship was an old wooden steamer of some five hundred tons which was officially transporting anthracite to the French city of Rouen. Its brass parts—handholds, bolts, locks, and window frames—were almost green with tarnish, and the ship's flag, covered with coal soot, could hardly be identified.

Verschoyle climbed the ship's slippery rope ladder, accompanied by the two sailors from

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the rowboat (one of whom had relieved him of his leather bag, so the guest could climb more easily). There was no one on deck. The two sailors took him to a cabin below. The cabin was empty, and the door was plated with the same tarnished brass. Verschoyle heard the turning of the key in the lock. At the same time he realized—more in rage than terror—that he had fallen into a trap, naively, like a fool.

The journey lasted eight days. Verschoyle spent these eight days and nights below deck, in a narrow cabin by the engine room, where the deafening noise of engines crushed the current of his thought and his sleep like a millstone. In a strange reconciliation with his fate (very deceptive, as shall be seen), he didn't bang on the door, he didn't call for help. It seemed he didn't even think of escape, which in any case was useless. In the morning he would wash himself over the tin basin, then glance at the food (herring, salmon, black bread, which they gave him three times a day through the round opening in the door), and without touching anything but water, lie down again on the hard sailor's bunk. He would stare through the porthole at the monotonous waves of the open sea. On the third day Verschoyle awoke from a nightmare: on the narrow bench across from his bunk, two men sat silently watching him. Verschoyle abruptly stood up.

The Traveling Companions

Blue-eyed, with healthy white teeth, the visitors smiled at Verschoyle amicably. With an unnatural politeness (unnatural for the time and place), they also rose at once, and introduced themselves, slightly nodding their heads. To Verschoyle, who introduced himself, the syllables of his own name suddenly sounded strange and altogether alien.

The next five days the three men spent in the hot, narrow cabin behind the brass-plated door in a terrible game of chance, resembling three-handed poker in which the loser pays with his life. Interrupting the discussion only to gobble a piece of dried herring (the fourth day Verschoyle also began to eat) or to refresh their dry throats and take a breather from their shouting (and then the deafening noise of the engines would become only the reverse of silence), the three men spoke of justice, of freedom, of the proletariat, of the goals of the Revolution, vehemently trying to prove their beliefs, as if they had purposely chosen this semidark cabin of a ship on international waters as the only possible objective and neutral terrain for this terrible game of argument, passion, persuasion, and fanaticism. With rolled-up sleeves, unshaven and sweaty, worn out from near fasting, they stopped the discussion completely only once: on the fifth day, the two visitors (besides their names, all that was known was that they were about twenty years old and not members of the crew) left Verschoyle alone for several hours. During that time, through the deafening noise of the engines, the Irishman heard the sound of a familiar foxtrot coming from the deck. Before midnight the music suddenly died, and the visitors returned, tipsy. They told Verschoyle that there was a celebration on board: a cablegram received that afternoon by the radioman had told them that their ship, the *Vitebsk,* had changed its name to *Ordzhonikidze.* They offered him some vodka. He refused, fearing poison. The young men understood and finished the vodka, laughing at the Irishman's distrust.

The sudden and unexpected halt of the engine noise abruptly interrupted the conversation in the cabin, as if that deadly rhythm was the ritual accompaniment which until then had given impetus and inspiration to their thoughts and arguments. Now they were silent, totally mute, listening to the waves splashing at the sides of the ship, to the thud of footsteps on deck, and the prolonged scraping of heavy chains. It was after midnight when the door of the cabin was unlocked, and the three men left their quarters strewn with cigarette butts and fishbones.

The Handcuffs

The *Vitebsk-Ordzhonikidze* dropped anchor in the open sea nine miles from Leningrad. From the cluster of distant lights on the shore, one soon separated, and grew larger, while the

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wind, like an advance guard, brought the noise of the boat that was approaching the ship. Three men in uniform, one with the rank of captain and the other two without insignia, approached Verschoyle and aimed their guns at him. Verschoyle put his hands up. They searched him, then tied a rope around his waist. Verschoyle compliantly went down the rope ladder and into the motorboat, where they handcuffed him to the seat. He watched the ghostly silhouette of the ship illuminated by searchlights. He saw his two companions also coming down the ladder with ropes tied around their waists. Soon all three sat side by side, handcuffed to the seat.

The Just Sentence

The true outcome of the six-day battle of words and arguments waged by the Irishman Gould Verschoyle and his two traveling companions will probably remain a secret to the contemporary researcher. It will also remain a psychological secret, and legally a most interesting one, whether it is possible for a man cornered by fear and despair to so sharpen his arguments and experience that he is able—without external pressure, without the use of force and torture—to throw into doubt all that has been developed through many years of upbringing, lectures, habit, and training in the consciousness of two other men. Then, perhaps, the decision of the high tribunal, which, according to some loftier justice, had pronounced the same stern sentence (eight years of imprisonment) on each of the three participants in that long game of persuasion, might not seem entirely arbitrary. For even if it is believed that the two men succeeded, through dense and exhausting ideological polemics, in dispelling certain suspicions that had appeared in the head of the Republican Verschoyle (suspicions with possible far-reaching consequences), there was a perfectly justified suspicion that the other two had also felt the fatal influence of certain counterarguments: in the merciless battle of equal opponents, as in a bloody cockfight, no one comes out unharmed, regardless of which one walks away with the empty glory of victory.*

Finale

We lose track of Verschoyle's two companions in Murmansk, on the banks of the Baltic Sea, where for a time during the terrible winter of 1942 they lay in the same section of the prison camp's outpatient ward, half blind and wasted with scurvy: all their teeth had fallen out, and they looked like old men.

Gould Verschoyle was murdered in November 1945, in Karaganda, after an unsuccessful attempt to escape. His frozen, naked corpse, bound with wire and hung upside down, was displayed in front of the camp's entrance as a warning to all those who dream of the impossible.

Postscript

In the commemorative volume *Ireland to Spain*, published by the Federation of Dublin veterans, the name of Gould Verschoyle is mistakenly entered among some one hundred Irish Republicans slain in the battle of Brunete. Thus Verschoyle enjoyed the bitter glory of being pronounced dead some eight years before his actual death. The famous battle of Brunete, waged bravely by the Lincoln Battalion, took place the night of July 8-9, 1938. □

*During the interrogation Verschoyle stubbornly denied that, on that fatal day, during his report, he had whispered into the commander's ear that coded messages were reaching Moscow. He could not have known that the interrogator had before him the report of the second-in-command in which Verschoyle's words, expressing the dangerous and sacrilegious suspicion "that Soviet secret agents are trying to usurp the leadership positions in the Republican army," were repeated verbatim. A brief encounter with the second-in-command, Chelyustnikov, at the transit station in Karaganda revealed this secret to him: the commander had informed his aide of Verschoyle's confidential declaration as if it were a good joke.

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Erazim Kohák

Religion and Socialism

God, it seems, *Is Not Altogether Dead,* even in the countries whose governments consider themselves "objectively socialist." To be sure, Vítězslav Gardavský, the Marxist philosopher who chose this for the title of his book, found himself transferred from the post of full professor at Prague's Charles University to that of a state-farm laborer, but that was to be expected. Gardavský sought to understand reality; but, as Karl Marx tells us, the task of a Marxist philosopher is to change it—and the "objectively socialist" regimes know just how they want it changed. Yet someone else once said that, if men fell silent, the very stones would prophesy. Where the writ of Karl Marx runs unchallenged, philosophers have indeed been silenced, but out of that silence the spontaneous vitality of religious faith has emerged as both an irrepressible and an incomprehensible fact.

I am not speaking now of the continued functioning of ecclesiastical organizations in East and Central Europe. That, too, is an irrepressible fact but, from a Marxist viewpoint, it is not incomprehensible. Since age-old habits change slowly, the victorious vanguard of the working class, carrying out social changes that will render religion obsolete, finds it in the meantime less onerous to tolerate the churches as vestigial remnants of the old order than to suppress them outright. This tolerance, to be sure, is seldom as benign nor are the churches as vestigial as theory would have it, but that is another matter. For the moment, let us accept the continued functioning of ecclesiastical organizations after the revolution as comprehensible in Marxist terms.

What remains incomprehensible, however, is the utterly nonvestigial, self-renewing vitality of personal religious faith. Religious believers, including ever new converts, *do believe,* strongly, vigorously, sincerely. The vitality of that faith surprises even Western observers by its contrast with the negligent unconcern of the West and the corrosive cynicism of the "objective socialist" societies in East and Central Europe. Admittedly, few nominal Marxists are as outspoken about their cynicism as Leonid Brezhnev who, at Dresden in 1968, interrupted the theoretical justification of the Czechoslovak reforms of the day with the bored remark, "That's ideology: the fact is, we've got you and we aren't letting you go." A less overt but no less profound cynicism pervades the Soviet empire. Here, for a generation and more, Marxism has been the legitimating ideology of arbitrary power and the passport to the all-important "three keys of life"—the key to one's own apartment, the key to one's own car, and the key to one's own *dacha.* Even the few well-meaning adolescents who start out wanting to believe in Marxism soon lose their faith in the abyss between the lifeless theory and the vicious praxis. They go on, repeating the prescribed phrases for the sake of the three keys—or to avoid "life in a single key," that to a jail cell. But with each repetition they grow more cynical until cynicism becomes a way of life and, as such, wholly unselective. Marxism in the role of a mystified ideology has utterly

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discredited not only itself but *all* ideology, all ideals, all beliefs. The common denominator of all the lands of the Soviet empire is that here people simply *do not believe.*

That is what makes it so utterly incomprehensible that religious believers do. They *do believe,* not simply in the sense of an intellectual assent to a set of creedal propositions but as a mode of life, a basic posture toward their God, their world and their neighbor. For this they pay a high price. In a society that makes total demands while strictly rationing rewards—"from each according to his [fullest] ability, to each [only] according to his needs"—the believer must accept the lowest preference in the rationing system of employment, housing, travel permits, educational opportunities for his or her children—while barred by his or her religious convictions from utilizing the usual escape mechanisms of all "objectively socialist" societies, graft and extortion. As for the clergy, they are restricted to a minimal stipend, subjected to constant harassment in the performance of their vocation, and ever under the threat of an arbitrary withdrawal of the required official "consent" to its performance. Yet, each year there are many more applicants to the seminaries than the seminaries may accept or the churches may place.

There is no evidence of a corresponding faith on the Communist side. Once, a revolution and countless purges ago, it was the Communists who believed. Today, in East Europe, I know of none who do, even among the active party members. It is a matter of the three keys. The Communist party can offer generous rewards and threaten with grievous sanctions. Even so, the average age of the membership of all Communist parties in power goes on rising. When young people do join the party, they speak apologetically of economic necessity, often reasoning that they do so for the sake of the children they hope to raise and send to school years hence. Those who hold out do little to hide their contempt for those who yield. In conversation after conversation, the same tacit assumption emerges. *Of course* it is impossible to believe in anything—but, if you must believe, then religious belief alone is not subject to universal scorn: if anything, religious believers command a certain respect.

Not that such believers constitute a majority or even a significant minority of the population: they do not. There are no reliable figures but a rough average of the divergent estimates of party officials and of the believers themselves would seem to put the figure at some 12 percent of the population. In all likelihood, it is approximately the same percentage as that of religious believers (as distinct from nominal church members) in the West. But in the West belief, not cynicism, is the accepted posture—be that belief ecological, political, social, or religious. In such a context, the figure of 12 percent is not surprising. It is surprising that it should remain constant even amid the all-corroding cynicism generated by a mandated monopolistic ideology.

We might, of course, postulate a psychological explanation, claiming that in any given population there will be a constant proportion of compulsive believers—and it might even be true. But why should such putative believers turn, of all things, to religion, defying both the atheist propaganda and the pervasive personal, social, and economic sanctions? This seems frequently as incomprehensible to intelligent Western observers as to the rulers of the Soviet empire, albeit for different reasons. The old Bolsheviks were convinced that property is theft—and wanted a piece of the action for themselves. To them the church appeared, not without reason, as an obstacle and a particularly greedy competitor. The old Bolsheviks could understand church membership only in terms of its once considerable economic advantages. Now that those advantages have been replaced by a staggering personal cost, their spiritual heirs cannot understand it at all.

For Western observers, the reasons for incomprehension are more complex. Their reaction to religion, at least in recent decades, lacked the edge of confrontation. More frequently, it ranged from a bored contempt to a patronizing indifference. Religion, it

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seemed to them, had simply ceased to matter. Having themselves opted for what they took to be more "rational" and less demanding creeds—such as science, socialism, psychoanalysis, or a vague "humanism"—leftist intellectuals in the West tended to assume that religion would wither away in the life of humankind at large as it had in their personal lives, except perhaps among the infirm, the aged, and the ignorant. The churches of the suburbs, selling self-indulgence to finance their affluence much as the three competing popes in the early 15th century sold indulgences to finance their mutual wars, seemed to confirm the thesis that religion is a vestigial social convention that would crumble if push ever came to shove.

In the Soviet Empire, push did come to shove, but it was not religious faith that crumbled away. Instead, over these 60 years, all the fashionable creeds disappeared in the acid cauldron of cynicism while religious faith alone emerged, purged and tempered, renewed in each generation. For anyone not swayed by the messianic rhetoric of the revolutionaries, the Revolution and its aftermath brought few real surprises. The self-renewing vitality of religious faith seems to be one of them.

On reflection, however, it is even more surprising that the persistence of religion should come as a surprise. Through countless millennia of human history, religious faith has been humankind's most persistent and pervasive trait. Even in purely anthropological terms, what separates the human in the full sense of the word from the naked ape, or even a lavishly dressed one, is the act of worship in which the subject bows before something that transcends and challenges the self-enclosed preoccupation with needs and satisfaction—the encounter with the Good, the Beautiful, the Holy. At the other end of the scale, it is in the act of worship, in the anguished prayer, "Thy will be done," that we humans rediscover ourselves when reality challenges our self-centered arrogance. Could we really have expected that this primordial, persistent trait would wither away in a generation or two in the wake of what, from the perspective of history, are really some rather trivial readjustments in property relations?

We could—and often did. Here the Marxists were not alone: their explicit predictions grew out of a far less articulate but widespread assumption that religion is old-fashioned, on its way out. The theologians, more prone to breast-beating than most of us, sought the reason in the "sin of the churches"—and not without justification. As Kierkegaard, among many others, pointed out, the pretentious arrogance of the churches makes more humans atheists than science and secularism combined. Emperor Constantine's linking of the throne and the altar, lasting through the centuries down to the "established" churches of our time, subordinated the claims of faith to the interests of secular power. The czars had their Orthodox Church, the Austrian emperors their Catholic one, the Prussian kings the Lutheran one, even the English royalty had, albeit in a far more genteel fashion, its Church of England—and they all called upon their churches to sanctify their every whim. Theologians like Josef Hromádka could, with much justification, conclude that the intellectuals could expect and the Bolsheviks demand a demise of religion because the churches themselves had trivialized and perverted religion first.

Unquestionably, the thesis about the "sin of the churches" was crucial for the survival of religious communities under Communist rule. But it had always been crucial. A faith that radically challenges the world can survive only because priests make compromises and prophets chastise them for it. Without the priestly compromises, the faith, like Kierkegaard's, would become pure, radical, and irrelevant for everyday life. Without the prophetic challenge of those compromises, faith would become domesticated, comfortable and vacuous: that, too, has been known to happen. Facing their own failings, as Hromádka called them to do, may have been the most painful but the most authentically religious response believers could have made to the Communist onslaught—whatever we

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may think of Hromádka's conspicuous silence in the face of the monstrous evil perpetrated by the new secular rulers.

But, for all that, the "sins of the churches" thesis does little to explain the widespread expectation of religion's impending demise. That thesis is, after all, basically a formula for a rebirth of the faith. As another East European theologian, Jan Milič Lochman, pointed out, this does explain why the churches under Soviet rule have grown less vestigial with each new generation. Shorn of the burden of power and glory, the churches have been thrown back on their strongest resource: the individual personal faith and the "secular witness" (Lochman) of the believers.

The reason for the expectation of religion's impending demise is more likely to lie in the failure of modern social sciences to grasp the vital reality of that personal faith. It is tempting to say that 20th-century social scientists—with such honorable exceptions as Weber or Berger—have utterly misunderstood religion. But such a claim would be neither fair nor accurate. They *have* understood religion, though from their special perspective, as a social phenomenon intelligible in terms of other social phenomena rather than in terms of its *sui generis* existential basis, personal religious faith. Within the methodological parameters of a social science conceived as a social physics rather than a social phenomenology, it was all that could be expected. After all, the goal of such science is objectivity—and religious faith is intrinsically and profoundly a personal matter.

In justice to the social sciences, their analyses, though dealing with the *social uses and abuses* of religion rather than with its essence, were frequently quite accurate. It would, for instance, be hard to gainsay the claim, incorporated into Marxism rather than originating with it, that religion has frequently been (used as) a mystified ideology to justify an unjustifiable social order. Indeed it has, as the prophet Amos pointed out long before Jan Hus, Hus before Kierkegaard, and Kierkegaard before Marx. Nor was Czar Nicholas the first to discover that a single priest is worth ten policemen. A good deal earlier, even before Emperor Constantine, the kings of Israel and Judah anticipated that discovery.

But it is a most problematic step from the claim that religion has been *so used* to the claim that such use is its very essence, so that religion could be expected to wither away as superfluous with the end of oppressive rule. Even upon the most superficial purview of the history of religion—such as Kautsky's—it becomes evident that religion has given humans the vision to revolt against oppression as frequently as it gave them the patience to bear it—or, from a sociological perspective, that religion has served as the ideology of revolution as often as it served as an ideology of oppression. The Protestant Reformation may be the most notorious instance but it is far from being the only one.

Basically, the "tool of oppression" theory utterly fails to account for the initial reality of religion as distinct from its particular uses. "Religions" that are invented *ad hoc,* to serve a particular purpose—as August Comte's "Cult of Humanity"—have little vitality. Even if we were to assume that all priests are always and *ex officio* the agents of calculating oppressors, it would remain true that their tales have power to compel only because they find an echo in the hearts and minds of their hearers. Religious faith has to *be there* before it can be *used* to justify oppression: it cannot be simply invented for the occasion.

The second stock "explanation" of religion, the "primitive science theory," does attempt to deal with the point. Again, it is a theory incorporated into rather than originating with Marxism. It holds, basically, that religion is an early and particularly inept attempt at constructing a theoretical explanation of natural phenomena and so can be expected to wither away as more adequate explanations, scientific or economic, become available.

The "primitive science" theory wins some initial credibility by noting that most religions do include in their literature tales of the origin of the world or of some of its phenomena, as the account of the origin of the rainbow in Genesis. That initial impression, however,

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will bear only little critical examination. It becomes quickly evident that, for the most part, such "how it happened" stories are quite peripheral to religious concerns. Even in Genesis, the focus is on the *meaning* of the rainbow or of the creation or whatever, rather than on its origins. Only occasionally, in rather special circumstances—as in the picaresque confrontation of fundamentalism with Darwin—did some believers take their faith for an alternative to scientific theory. At most times and for the most part, however, the believers' questions were not scientific—"how did it come about?"—but intensely existential: "What does it mean?" "What must I do to be made whole?"

More basically again, the "primitive science" theory is marred by a particularly problematic assumption of its own—that the primordial stance of the human toward the world is that of a *knower,* whose primary task and concern is that of *explaining* it. That charmingly naive projection of the mentality of 19th-century scientists to the dawn of history builds on a basic misunderstanding. The human in his freedom is marked by the *need to understand.* That, however, is something quite different from the *desire to explain.* The latter is basically egocentric. Its purpose is to determine causal antecedents and structures to facilitate the manipulation of particular phenomena. The *need to understand* poses a different question, that of the human's place in the cosmos and of the meaning and direction of human life. This is the religious focus of the stories of creation, which a more adequate "scientific" explanation does not displace.

Of all the stock explanations, it is the "wish-fulfillment" theories—including Marx's statement about the "opium of the people"—that speak most specifically to the central question of *why* humans believe. The element of relief from the strains and cares of this world in the "peace that passeth all understanding" is a genuine dimension of religious experience. The believer does live in two dimensions, one sacred, the other profane, drawing on the former for the strength and perspective to cope with the weariness of the latter.

This genuinely religious dimension, however, is trivialized when it is interpreted as an escape from a real to a vicarious fulfillment—whether by the observer or by the believer himself. The genuine comfort that faith finds is inseparable from the stern demand it imposes. I know of no more agonizing experience than that of placing oneself under the perspective of the prayer of confession. The absolution, the "comfortable words," the "peace that passeth understanding" are a resolution of that agony, trivial without it. To interpret them simply as an escape and to identify that as the "essence" of religion suggests a rather shallow grasp of religious experience.

But even if we were to accept the "wish-fulfillment" or "opiate" theories at face value, they still would not warrant an expectation of religion's demise after an economic reordering. The ills from which humans have sought escape or comfort in religion have seldom been the trivial complaints that such a reordering can eliminate. It is *in extremis* that humans most urgently turn to their God: in the face of death, guilt and meaninglessness. The comfort that religion offers speaks to the grief of the needless perishing of what is good and precious, including life itself, to the remorse of choices in which one good must be bought at the cost of another, to the weariness and futility of finitude. These are perennial aspects of human life, not a function of a particular economic system. If Marx were right in his "opium" theory and rather more perceptive as to just what pain that opium deadens, he would have had to conclude that religious faith will be a perennial feature of human life, becoming, if anything, purer and more prominent in a socialist society that replaces the supportive system of family and kinship with a soulless "rational" ordering of production and consumption.

What I have offered so far is, admittedly, a very limited sample of our usual misconceptions about religion. But, even out of that limited sample, a clear pattern emerges. The root of our incomprehension and fallacious

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predictions is methodological. We have customarily dealt with religion in its manifestations rather than in its essence, approaching it as disinterested observers of social phenomena instead of inquiring into the lived experience that is expressed in and through such phenomena. Given our empirico-mathematical bias, this, as we have already noted, is not surprising. At least since Galileo we have treated the perspective of the disinterested observer as privileged, the intentionality of the subject as biased and suspect. Having failed to distinguish between private, relative subjectivity and the necessary, transcendental structure of subject being, we have discarded all subjectivity as suspect, setting as the goal of our research the construction of objective models of social phenomena as of something "out there," analogous to thunderstorms and earthquakes. We have discarded any attempt actually to understand such phenomena from within, as subjects actually live them, as hopelessly tainted by private bias.

Our objectifying methodology might be adequate for the natural sciences. But human acts (and so social phenomena) are different: what makes them intelligible is precisely the way subjects experience them in the perspective of their lived needs, hopes, and understanding. To understand phenomena so structured we need a radically different methodology, one that would describe the "inner logic" of such acts as love, hate or, for that matter, worship. Such "inner logic," while it can be said to be "subjective," is neither arbitrary nor private. Rather it describes, *generically, any subject's* way of being in a world and, as such, remains constant between subjects and through the ages while alleged "objectivities" vary widely. The perennial "logic" of, say, jealousy is the same in the Biblical triangle of David, Bathsheba, and Uriah, in Shakespeare's *Othello,* or in the minor tragedies acted out in our domestic relations courts. This is why we can understand events long ago or far away: though the external trappings observed by the "empirical" sociologist may be vastly different, the patterns of relations, in the experience as subjects live it, remain constant. The constant structure of the subject way-of-being that we describe as "religion" is also the key to religion as a social phenomenon. In our century, Edmund Husserl and his successors have developed a methodology for describing such constant structures under the forbidding title of transcendental phenomenology. This, basically, means taking as the starting point for inquiry precisely those constant structures of subject experience of which subjects are directly aware (albeit in ordinary experience only marginally), isolating and describing them and interpreting the actual phenomena through them. Here, then, the privileged perspective is that of the believer rather than of an observer, though of the believer as acting out a *type* of experience rather than in terms of his idiosyncratic *ways of* acting out that (type of) experience.

A number of scholars have used such an approach in dealing with religion, as Rudolf Otto did in *Das Heilige,* William James in *The Varieties of Religious Experience,* Gerardus van der Lieuw in *Religion in Essence and Manifestation,* or Paul Tillich in *The Dynamics of Faith.* The privileged source of information, however, remains the confession of the believer, whether it is the classic confessions of an Augustine or a Kierkegaard, or the moving testimony of such saints and martyrs of our time as Dietrich Bonhoffer or Jaroslav Šimsa—or the far less dramatic testimony provided by the lives and presence of the men and women among us whom God has touched with his hand, transforming their lives. Throughout, it is their lived experience, seen from within, that is the key and the prerequisite to understanding religion in its living essence.

Let us ask then, what does it mean *to believe,* and ask it no longer as a social scientist describing a phenomenon but as a believer living that experience. Believers, seeking to articulate that experience, usually grope for words, simultaneously generating religious "doctrine" and misleading readers into looking for a doctrinal "content" rather than to the existential stance of faith. The

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lived truth becomes a spoken untruth unless the hearer recognizes the radically subordinate position of that "content" in religious experience. For this experience is not something humans invent or do, it is something that encounters them, something to which they respond but whose core is still a *passio* rather than an act. What humans say is secondary: the fundamental reality is what God does. God is the subject in faith, God the one who acts.

Understanding this central reality of religious experience admittedly challenges all the deeply ingrained egocentric habits and methods of our time. To the believer, however, it is absolutely crucial. Any systems of belief or observance that humans invent of their own initiative—even though they may include counters like God, worship, prayer—are not yet religion. Such systems remain the vain "cunningly devised fables of men" of which Apostle Paul speaks. If their impetus is sociological, as with Comte's "Cult of Humanity," they remain vacuous. If that impetus is genuinely religious, as in Kierkegaard's religion of "infinite resignation" (the "religious stage A"), they become a despairing recognition of the futility of all human efforts at religious self-help—at healing, making whole, "saving" (from *salus,* meaning both healed and made whole) a life that, under the conditions of estranged finitude, is inevitably broken and conflict-ridden. Such tragic writers as Nietzsche or Camus are witnesses not to atheism but to a *despair of religion,* sensitive to the religious longing to be made whole, the longing for reconciliation. Without that, they would be blind to the tragic dimension of life. If these writers regard that tragic dimension not merely as real but as ultimate, it is because they despair of a fulfillment of that longing in a recognition that such fulfillment escapes human effort. The religious believer would agree with their assessment: for him, religion in the strict sense begins not with what humans do or fail to do but rather with what God does: when God enters in, touching and transforming a life that is trivial or desperate without Him.

But does God "exist"? For a believer, this is a non-question, showing utter incomprehension. The religious experience that alone could even occasion the question for God is precisely one of an encounter with the overwhelming reality of God's presence. This is not a conclusion but the starting point of religious experience. Then who (or what) is God? This, too, is a non-question, requiring a degree of detachment that is utterly incongruous within the experience of God's presence. *God is:* this is the startling, overwhelming recognition that opens a religious dimension before the human. I AM THAT I AM: that basic, inescapable, radically transforming realization is an attempt to articulate the awesome experience of *standing in the presence of God.* The believer, hitherto just a human tossed to and fro by every wind of fate and doctrine, finds himself standing in the presence and perspective of the *mysterium tremendum et fascinans* (Otto), in the presence of the Holy. Standing in the presence—or, more accurately, God confronting the human—is the innermost core of all religious experience, the given from which all else derives: the *Presence of God.*

If, in that context, didactic discourse is still in order, it is in a different mode, asking not whether or what God is, but rather how God's presence transforms the human situation. Here the Book of Job presents the classic paradigm: the confrontation with God's presence brings about a fundamental inversion of perspective. It is no longer Ego, I, the believer, who is the central point of reference, the measure of all things, the norm of joy and grievance. God in His majesty becomes that. Look to the Book of Job! Ignore the naive folktale of the good man tried and rewarded within which a later author set his distinctly religious statement. For that matter, you can pass lightly over Job's debate with his three counselors and the young zealot Elihu. They speak falsely, God declares in the final chapter, but, more: in this debate Job is still not a religious man. His questions remain egocentric: why does God do this *to me*? The religious core of the book comes in Chapters 38:1 to 42:6, in Job's confrontation with God

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and in the utter inversion of perspective in the last three verses cited. Here—not in the naive tale of bounty appended to it—is the real resolution, the fundamental transformation. Nothing is changed yet everything is transformed. Reconciliation and, incidentally, the freedom of action that follows from it, become possible because the center of reference is no longer Job's plaint but God Himself, the perspective no longer finitude but eternity.

In far less dramatic terms, it is this transformation that shines forth from the lives of the saints of our latter day, from the prison letters of a Bonhoffer or a Šimsa, from the daily life of the countless witnesses whose lives God has touched and transformed. Seen from without, it might appear as humility, but that is not quite accurate. It is, rather, the confidence and the freedom of knowing what matters—and what infinitely does not. When the Presence of God replaces the believer's petty cares and concerns as the central reference point, the believer finds a confidence and a freedom that no longer depend on this world—and so cannot be threatened by it. All of us, finally, shape our lives with reference to whatever we experience as the dominant presence within those lives. The believer differs because for him that presence is not some privileged yet still precarious segment of this world—but God Himself. Formally defined, the believer is one who lives his life *in God's presence*.

That is why, unlike in secular or secularized creeds, the core of the religious outreach is not the teaching of specific doctrines but rather the opening of the eyes of fellow humans to the Presence of God. As with Paul on the road to Damascus, the "teaching"—really the articulation of the confrontation with God—comes later. The primordial reality is the recognition of God's presence, obscured in daily life by preoccupation, pride and guilt, breaking through them in moments of dramatic or quiet crisis, placing human life in a new perspective. Far more than any doctrines, practices, or "beliefs," it is the perspective of God's presence that the religious believer holds out to those about him, especially in lands where the churches have been stripped of anything else they might offer. One thing alone remains, one thing alone the believer can offer—the recognition of the Presence of God.

But why in the world should such an offering, promising no advantages and exacting a heavy cost, hold any appeal to anyone in a society that has been thoroughly secularized, permeated by cynicism and corruption, and driven into an escape from a mandated ideology in the quest for the three keys? It meets none of the needs that the system recognizes or creates. Its appeal is entirely extrasystematic. Paradoxically, I believe that this precisely is its strength: the religious appeal ignores the entire artificial system mandated by the state and the party, the clichés and commands of Marxism and common sense alike. It speaks clearly and specifically to the genuine human needs, beneath all our distractions and confusions. It is to the point.

For consider, what is it that humans really need? Confident in our ability to produce material goods, we have a vested interest in considering material needs as fundamental. So they are—but *only as long as they are not met*—and they are so easy to meet! A jug of wine, a loaf of bread, or, more prosaically, a bowl of lentils and a fire: it takes so little to assure physical survival even at a reasonable level of comfort. Our ever expanding material desires can hardly be called "needs": if they so appear, it is because we are trying to satisfy, with a surfeit of material goods, needs that are no longer material but distinctively human, the needs for *centering* and *homecoming,* and their reconciliation.

The metaphors of *centering* and *homecoming,* though familiar, may seem arbitrary, but the needs they represent are not. Rather, those follow rigorously from the distinctively *human* dimension of our being. To determine what our real needs are, we cannot look around, surveying our actual desires. Those reflect far more our confusion than our understanding. We need to ask instead, what

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does it mean to be human as this presence that I am aware of being? Seen from within, as I actually am that, what does it mean *to be as a human?*

A detailed analysis, recounting centuries of philosophical reflection, would be out of place here, especially since what concerns us is not the products of reflection but rather the immediate givens of direct awareness, the fact and task of being human as something in which we ourselves are engaged, seen from a first-person perspective, and that not in its multifarious contingent details but in the stark essential structure, *being-human.*

Borrowing from the terminology of recent thought, we can identify that basic awareness as one of existing or, more precisely, of *ek-sisting,* of standing out of the self-confining cycle of "natural necessity" into the openness of freedom. For all its apparent obscurity, that assertion points to the most ordinary of experiences—that of choosing who I shall be. Being human means being self-chosen. A person who does not stand out in freedom, including, much of the time, our selves, is functioning on a less than fully human level. More specifically, for a subject who cannot imagine things being other than they are, whatever happens to be actual also appears as necessary, a "matter of course." That is how things are, that is how we have always done it, that is what "everybody" does—and, unable to imagine aught else, that is what we shall go on doing, blindly, automatically. The basic human experience is that of breaking out of such blind, automatic routine in imagining alternatives. Here freedom enters in, since we are no longer facing a single predetermined track but rather a range of possibilities. Here humanity enters in as well, because among all that range we *have to choose* which shall become actual. Who we shall be is no longer something that happens to us, it is something we choose. Even if our alternatives are limited, even if we are simply reaffirming what we find ourselves being, we are still choosing. Being human means being responsible for who we are. Even if we seek to hide from that responsibility and humanity by inventing factors that allegedly determine the course of our lives, DNA, IQ, class, or national consciousness, whatever, the actual lived situation remains that of freedom and responsibility: at this moment, *I must choose*—and even if in retrospect I convince myself that, given my DNA or my class background, I "could not have" chosen otherwise, this is no comfort in the agony of choosing—nor does it change the basic reality of choice, that is, of freedom as the basic trait of our distinctive humanity.

The dual need for *centering* and *homecoming* follows rigorously from that basic trait of our being as we actually live it as first-person subjects. In standing out into freedom, we lose both the unproblematic, unquestioning assurance of our identity and the easy, unquestioned sense of belonging. As free, we stand out, alone and precarious. Sometime take a moment to watch a turtle sunning itself on a hot rock by a pool: it is hard not to envy it; it seems so utterly at one with itself, so at home and at peace in its world. The son of man, the Bible tells us by contrast, has no place to lay down his head, and our experience confirms it. We belong nowhere, we need seek a home, struggle for an identity. In standing out into freedom, we win freedom at the cost of losing the peace of a center, of a home: centering and homecoming become the pressing preoccupation of the human in his humanity.

The great appeal of religious faith is precisely the promise, demonstrably fulfilled in men like Bonhoffer or Šimsa, of a great reconciliation, of centering and homecoming. For that matter, as Eric Hoffer wrote long ago, that essentially religious promise is the driving force behind all great ideologies, including socialism. Democratic socialists, keenly aware of the ravages wrought upon their ideals by fanaticism, tend to be most wary of any such messianic appeal—and, as we shall argue, rightly so. But the threat of fanaticism is one horn of a dilemma whose other horn is impotence. For, stripped of its messianic appeal, what does socialism have to offer? Basically, it is a proposal to use the

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machinery of the state to assure certain socially desirable economic goals, namely, providing economic security to individuals in a fragmented yet interdependent society (the "welfare state") and preventing domination of the society by major economic aggregates (nationalization or control of basic industries).

Both of these, to be sure, are entirely reasonable goals—and even urgent ones. The Weimar Republic and its aftermath present a graphic demonstration of the explosive social consequences of a failure to meet them. But while noble and desirable, such proposals will hardly fire a mighty movement of social transformation. They are plain economic rationality, no less evident to Bismarck than to Marx. They represent not THE GREAT TRUTH but a homely truism, capable of winning economic arguments yet incapable of capturing the imagination of humans preoccupied with concerns more basic than the economic—the need for a sense of personal identity and of social integration, for centering and homecoming. Socialism can capture that imagination by promising to meet those needs, but whenever it or any secular movement makes that promise, posing as the Great Truth, it becomes The Great Lie. Not by accident, nor by ill will, but necessarily: under the conditions of estranged finitude, the conflicting demands of centering and homecoming are not reconcilable by human effort.

That obscure theological recognition again points to an all too ordinary experience. Faced with the agonizingly conflicting demands of this world, the human avoids subclinical schizophrenia by rejecting those demands and focusing on his "centering" with a solipsistic intensity. This is the operative principle in the various psychohygienic movements that promise "peace of mind," such as transcendental meditation, Jungianism, or any of a number of pietistic cults using vaguely religious terminology. Within the scope that such movements set for themselves, they achieve impressive results: their adepts, perfectly centered in their emotions, do experience a profound "inner peace"—while utterly oblivious to the desolation of wrecked lives and relations wrought about them by their solipsistic self-absorbtion.

Vice versa, the same is true of mass movements that promise their followers a sense of homecoming, of belonging and having a place, such as Marxian or national socialism, or various quasi-religious "crusades." Here homecoming is bought at the cost of centering. Again, it is no accident: among humans insecure in their identity and precarious in their freedom, belonging can be purchased only at the cost of conforming, subordinating the demands of centering to the exigencies of the integration that creates the illusion of having come home. Not without reason did the messianic mass movements rail against "individualism"—"Jewish" if right-wing, "bourgeois" if left. For giving up individuality, the personal centering of freedom and responsibility, is the price that must be paid for the illusion of homecoming achieved by human effort.

In cultural or political opposition, such movements can be quite appealing: alleged "enemies" or "lack of power" absolve them from having to fulfill their promises while their emphasis does compensate for the solipsistic egoism of an open society—just as the solipsism of psychohygienic cults compensates for the conformism of mass culture. But what if any such movement were to triumph? History provides the answer: the moment of triumph becomes the moment of disintegration. The triumphant messianic movement must first invent enemies to postpone having to make good its promises, then it must lie, claiming that the promise has in fact been fulfilled while silencing anyone who might note the Emperor's nakedness. There is no other way for, in the perspective of estranged finitude, the reconciliation of centering and homecoming remains an unattainable goal.

The great strength of genuine religious faith—not of pietistic cults or ecclesiastical pretentions but of genuine personal faith—is that it alone, by replacing the perspective of Ego and finitude with that of God and eternity, makes a reconciliation of centering and homecoming possible. As Job in Chapter

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42:1-6, as St. Paul, Dietrich Bonhoffer or Jaroslav Šimsa in their prison letters, as countless humble believers in their daily lives—the believer achieves a centering that is not contingent upon the vicissitudes of a personal Ego: in God the believer finds a center impervious to the clamor of the world. Yet precisely that freedom from the world enables the believer to accept the world and to act in it, for all its knavery and folly, as in a place of homecoming in a reconciling love. Since his freedom is won by turning *to* God rather than *against* the world, the believer's centering is compatible with homecoming. Since that homecoming is based on rediscovering and reconstituting the world as God's world rather than on conformity, it is compatible with centering. While pietistic cults and mass movements shift perspective from one finite being to another, perpetuating the old conflicts in new forms, the profound religious inversion displaces the entire perspective of finitude with one of eternity, that of Ego not with singular or collective Alter-Ego but of God. What secular and secularized movements promise—a genuine reconciliation of centering and homecoming—becomes, for the believer, a lived reality.

That, finally, is the reason why religious faith rises ever again, renewed and purified, out of the destruction of the churches and the collapses of secular messianism. But it is more than that: it is also a key to the significance of religious faith for socialism and secular politics. Wherever there is a vital religious faith to meet the most preoccupying human needs of centering and homecoming, socialism is free to be what it can and need be, an urgent truism providing rational solutions to specific problems. If, however, those two basic needs are not met, socialism finds itself forced into posing as The Great Truth—and so into becoming The Great Lie. Not by accident did socialism remain a useful truism in those countries where religious faith had least been preempted and discredited by ecclesiastical pretentions—in the Scandinavian countries, in England, in America. Nor is it an accident that in those countries where a powerful ecclesiastical hierarchy effectively preempted religious faith for itself, as in Italy or France, socialism assumed the messianic form of Communism. Had the Franco and Salazar regimes collapsed before the lessons of Hungary and Czechoslovakia sank in, I doubt the story would have been different in Spain and Portugal. Socialism can be "democratic"—that is, rational rather than messianic, solving specific problems rather than attempting global transformations—only where a vital religious faith effectively confronts and resolves the pressing needs for centering and homecoming, and their reconciliation.

Here America may prove the acid test. For two centuries and more, religious faith in America has been largely the property of believers rather than of ecclesiastical establishments; churches have been communities of believers rather than power hierarchies. Here, too, socialism—the assurance of individual security and the control of economic aggregates—seems likely to be realized at the smallest human cost, in the name of economic rationality rather than of a secular faith. Socialists in the free world have a vital stake in the reality of personal religious faith: it is their defense against messianic expectations and aspirations.

But what of our original point, the reemerging, self-renewing vitality of religious faith in the lands of "objective socialism"? The principle holds there, too, though its implications are difficult to predict. Certainly, the emergence of spontaneous religious faith in lands where it long had been preempted by established hierarchies, as in Russia or the Ukraine, together with the tenacity of religious faith in such lands as Lithuania, Czechoslovakia, or East Germany, will offer the possibility of a rational and democratic socialism in the future. But between that future and the present there stands the future collapse of the Soviet empire. Whether it comes through Chinese intervention, internal economic strangulation, nationalist revolt, or some yet unforeseen cause, it will inevitably

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be traumatic—and the cynicism bred for years by the Soviet regime will provide little material for building a new secular regime in the aftermath of the trauma. It is quite possible that the 12 percent of committed believers—a far greater force than a disoriented and unconcerned 88 percent—will yield to temptation and replace Marxist autocracy with an Orthodox theocracy, restarting the vicious cycle of discredited religion and secular messianism. It is not a cheerful prospect.

There is, to be sure, the other possibility—that the reborn faith, growing as it does from individual religious experience rather than from ecclesiastical momentum, will eschew the temptation of secular power and will address itself to the pressing need for reconciliation of centering and homecoming, leaving the secular arm free to deal with the mundane tasks of formulating rational solutions to social problems. It would be the first time in Russian history that Russia would have a secular—that is, non-messianic—government and could at last take its place among the lands of the European heritage rather than hovering as a perennial threat on their periphery. That is a most attractive possibility, though it would take a great deal of optimism to claim that it is a likely one.

Predicting the future is a precarious undertaking but, even in the present, we can discern a perennial principle: the success of a secular reform movement is contingent on the stability of religious faith. Not, to be sure, on the stability of ecclesiastical institutions: those are peripheral to religious faith and, in their secularized stability, can be detrimental to faith and reform alike. In that respect, the antiecclesiastical rhetoric of socialism echoes a genuinely prophetic critique of the priestly establishment.

Still, this is but a trivial truth. The profound, perennial truth is that the success of socialism in its appointed task of secular economic reform does depend on the stability of personal religious faith. Socialism's appearance on the stage of world history is as fleeting as the special phase of socioeconomic development whose by-product it is—it is religious faith, rooted in the very condition of being-human, that is perennial. The special rage that Communist interrogators reserve for imprisoned priests reflects the repressed realization that there will still be God's priests, prophets, and believers long after the world has forgotten the commissars and their evil genius.

Success or failure during that period cannot be measured in terms of socialism's ability to bring commissars to power but rather in terms of its socioeconomic impact. Socialism can be a great force for freedom and justice—or it can be a particularly vicious tool of oppression, especially destructive because it can place a total monopoly of economic as well as political and cultural initiative in the hands of an oppressor. Which it will be depends, I submit, on whether socialism can remain a useful (and urgent) truism or whether, having to pose as The Great Truth, it will become The Great Lie. More prosaically, if socialism can rely on the vitality of religious faith to resolve the basic *human* needs for centering and homecoming, it can remain free to cope with humankind's trivial yet urgent *socioeconomic* needs. If, however, socialism must address our basic *human* needs, it cannot but fail, as it has already and necessarily failed in the Soviet empire—while the economic problems that it might resolve successfully go unmet and so acquire overpowering proportions.

Sixty years after the Bolshevik revolution, the rhetorical prayer "God help socialism!" is no longer a mildly amusing mixture of an old faith and a new. It is a belated recognition of what is perennial and what temporal. □

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Paul Lermack

TV: The Interruptible Medium

Criticism of commercial television seems to increase each year. Educators complain that it has not lived up to its potential. Political scientists, who expected TV to increase communication between citizens and government—to enhance democracy—now complain that it has deteriorated into an advertising service for politicians.

Most notable of all, television is accused of failing even as entertainment. It has failed, according to critics, not only because it does not broadcast the great classics of drama, but because it has not developed an art form of its own. Early innovative uses of television, such as *Studio One*, were quickly eliminated. There is a feeling that the early 1950s, when such programs flourished, represented television's "golden age." At its close, TV's staples became "normal TV": situation comedies and situation dramas, game or variety shows, news and sports. Although TV once brought us *Richard III* and the Kennedy-Nixon debates, its time now is usually filled with such programs as *Charlie's Angels* and *Let's Make a Deal.*

TV's failures are usually blamed on the people who operate the commercial stations. According to Russell Baker, once it was decided to use TV as a marketing device, it had to become "a flickering billboard that would provide constant advice about what goods were available for purchase." Since they can increase their rates by increasing the size of the audience they deliver to advertisers, broadcasters are driven by greed to continuously enlarge the pool of viewers sitting before their "electronic billboards." Businessmen are not committed to aesthetic values, nor are they ashamed to produce trash. If violence attracts more viewers, they will produce violence. And so, the argument goes, *their* greed has replaced good programs with sellable ones; *their* demands for "impact" have filled the airwaves with violence; and *their* reluctance to offend any possible viewer has killed political broadcasting. Most viewers, it is said, deplore this state of affairs but are locked into the system. Since the "electronic billboard" only works one way, they cannot communicate to the broadcasters their desire for higher quality or less violence.

Suggested remedies include reducing television's domination by businessmen. Specific proposals include elimination of commercials (and paying for programming by user charges), censorship to reduce violence, or the creation of a federal regulatory commission to oversee programming. All these proposals are meant to control what is seen as the greed of broadcasters, and to liberate the creativity that this greed holds in check.

But this argument, plausible as it first seems, is not sufficient to account for television's sad condition. The proposed cures will not improve its quality. Most have been tried and have not had the desired effects. In 1975 violence was curtailed through the self-censorship of the "family hour," but the result was not an improvement. Whatever impact violence had was replaced with drippily sentimental melodramas (as in *The Waltons*), or with the hysterics of the game shows.

Hamlet and other classics have been broadcast many times—often in innovative and polished versions—but have never been commercial successes. Viewers turn off "good" political programs, and shun even the most carefully made documentaries. Public broadcasting exists as an alternative to the

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commercial stations, but it too has been seduced by "normal television." It has attracted large audiences only by broadcasting programs similar to those of the commercial stations. *Upstairs, Downstairs*, for example, is a soap opera, more carefully made than any of its prime-time commercial equivalents, but a soap opera.

TV cannot give us *Hamlet*, the antibroadcaster argument goes, because TV must appeal to the largest possible audience. Poorly educated people, a majority in most parts of the country, will not watch *Hamlet*. Instead, television gives us *The Beverly Hillbillies*, which poorly educated people *will* watch. But there is an unasked question behind this line of reasoning: if poorly educated people will not watch *Hamlet* because it is unsuited to their intellectual level, why, then, won't well-educated people similarly refuse to watch *The Beverly Hillbillies*? Fourteen percent of all Americans are college graduates. Many more have partial college education or are still students. They are certainly much better educated than the audience for which *Hamlet* was written. Is it not a paradox that in recent years, while higher levels of educational achievement brought about a new interest in ballet, the establishment of new regional professional theater groups, and some interest in serious films, TV alone declined in intellectual content?

The relationship between TV and its viewers clearly must be more complex than its critics have assumed. Communication involves senders and receivers. When the message is of poor quality, we assume the senders are at fault, for they have the initiative. The receivers are passive, and can influence the content of the message only by refusing it. But this is really a great control: over time, by refusing certain kinds of messages, they can set constraints on what is communicated. The senders, the broadcasters, are aptly named, because they cast their signals broadly. They have very little knowledge of what viewers want. They know only that certain kinds of programming—including *The Beverly Hillbillies*—is uniformly received, and other kinds—including *Hamlet* and most documentaries—are uniformly rejected. But they do not know why this is so, for they don't know why viewers watch. To understand why and how people watch TV we must study the TV experience; we must look at it from the viewer's perspective.

People watch TV in their homes, without any special preparations. They watch in groups. The sets are located in living rooms, dens, or kitchens. Unlike movie screens or stages, TV screens take up only part of the viewer's visual fields and are rarely the only source of activity in the rooms in which they are located. *People do other things while viewing*: they eat, write letters, or knit. Housewives dart in and out while cooking. Children play with toys, snatching glimpses of programs and then turning away into their own imaginations. Teen-agers read, study, or talk on the phone. There is a great deal of distracting motion and noise. Beer glasses must be refilled and ringing telephones answered. Adults must give attention to crying infants, or to children who bicker, shriek, or ask questions.

Home TV watchers cannot give undivided attention to their sets because they are frequently distracted or interrupted. (This is also true when television is watched in such semipublic places as bars, military or prison dayrooms, or the lounges of college dormitories or senior-citizens' homes.) Aside from elderly persons living alone, few people have frequent opportunities for prolonged uninterrupted viewing.

TV demands no special preparation or attention. No one has to come home from work early, or put on his good clothes, because the family is going to watch TV. No one has to worry about driving in traffic, baby-sitters, or being late. The room lights need not be dimmed. If people must come in late, they do not mind missing the first act—as they would if they had to pay $15 for tickets. Because it is always available and can be viewed in bits and pieces, TV fills half the leisure time of the average American. If distractions cause the viewer to miss a bit of

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the program, then perhaps he can catch up by asking questions of someone else in the room. People watch television to get bits of enjoyment when they are not entirely free. When baby-sitters are available, adult viewers will seek more engrossing forms of entertainment: bowling, movies, bridge, etc.

But in order for television to be so accommodating—in order, that is, for it to be understandable without full concentration—its content must be considerably different from that of more demanding media. *Television must be interruptible.*

Surprisingly, this is difficult to achieve. Most forms of entertainment are not interruptible. A serious drama like *Hamlet* demands full attention; anyone who goes out for popcorn in the middle will miss something, and he will not be able to catch up easily. The same attention is required for modern plays, fast-moving sports like hockey, and films. Movies, especially, are very fast-paced. Such diverse films as *A Night at The Opera, Rocky,* and *Jaws* all obtain their effects by sucking viewers into their worlds and never pausing long enough for doubt to creep in. Even though television presents comedies and melodramas, it cannot simply copy the content of other media. TV needs its own content.

To be televisable, dramatic plots cannot be too complex. Viewers must be able to grasp the conflict even if they miss the first act, or miss stray scenes along the way. TV plots are usually elemental conflicts (a tale of revenge, for example, or a love triangle), and do not have many subplots. The same stories are used over and over, so the audience is familiar with them. For instance, a common plot used by situation detective dramas will have the detective-hero accused of commiting a crime. The audience knows that the accusation must be false (if for no other reason than that the hero must return for next week's episode), and they have watched enough similar programs to know that he will try to clear himself by finding the real criminal. Knowing all this, they may miss some scenes without much loss. Standard and often-repeated scenes are used: the detective-hero questions the widow of the victim; the misguided police, who are trying to arrest him, must be led astray by his faithful sidekick so he will be free to find the real murderer, etc. Viewers always know how the story will come out. They are not bored—as they would be if they had to watch familiar material in movie houses—because they are distracted by other things, and because they are always a step or two out of touch with the action. And because the plot is not important, reruns are possible. A viewer may have seen the program before, but he is unlikely to have seen *all* of it before.

Just as it must use simple plots, so TV must use simple characters who have easily graspable motivation. Suspects in a murder mystery may be jealous, insane, or seeking revenge, but they cannot be, like Hamlet, ambiguous. Characters must never act out of character: the good doctor must always act to spare his patients pain, and the good policeman must always fight injustice. If there were inconsistencies—if, for instance, the good doctor were shown splitting a fee, or the good policeman accepting a bribe—viewers might become confused. They would then assume that they had missed some vital bit of information, and that, consequently, the program is too complex to watch with limited attention.

TV always avoids ambiguity. In order to aid viewers in identifying and following the characters, visual cues are used. A good doctor will be silver-haired, a good policeman square-jawed. Raincoats, sheepskins, and even lollipops are associated with characters; at one time, each hero of a Western series had his own trick gun. Such visual cues identify scenes as well as actors. If the viewer comes in in the middle of a scene and observes two actors talking, he must be able to reconstruct the thrust of their conversation from what he already knows and fit it into its plot context. There are special ways for a television lawyer to interview his client, for a detective to question a suspect, and for a doctor to console the relatives of a dying patient. Background detail, or tone of voice, or the mannerisms of the characters identify the scene even if the viewer can't hear all the dialogue.

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One way to insure that characters and visual cues will be familiar is to schedule series. All the programs in a series share the same actors, characters, and plot conventions, but each tells a complete story. Serials, which are similar, have continuing actors and characters, but each program is an episode in a continuing story. Most TV dramas and comedies are series or serials. There are also business reasons for this: the series format simplifies the hiring of actors and technical personnel, makes it possible to write scripts quickly (because the conventions are always the same), and allows advertisers to buy time in a known commodity. But these business reasons, by themselves, are not sufficient to account for the dominance of series and serials. In the early days of TV, many dramatic programs (*Playhouse 90, Four Star Playhouse*) were continuous in name only, presenting totally different stories each week, and retaining only the technical personnel and some of the actors. And the recent successes of such mini-series as *Roots* indicate that other ways of scheduling programs are commercially feasible.

The most important reason for the series format is that it permits the audience to become familiar with the conventions of the programs gradually. It may take a few weeks for the audience to realize that Colombo will always wear his tan raincoat, but, once this convention is learned, it greatly simplifies viewing. The viewer need only catch a glimpse of light-colored clothing in long shots in order to know that Colombo is on the screen. He can then follow the action with only a quick glimpse now and again.

In order to be interruptible, the pace and structure of TV programs must differ from those of other media. Unlike staged drama and film, which strive to obtain the emotional involvement of their audiences by making the action as fast and intense as possible, TV must slow down its action and break its programs up into short, discrete bits. TV programs work best as collections of short scenes each of which stands wholly or partly on its own. For example, news programs are always collections of stories, each complete in itself and illustrated with its own picture. Variety and "talk" programs are collections of songs, jokes and skits, each understandable without reference to the others.

Even programs that seem more unified are actually made up of separable bits. Situation comedies are collections of jokes. Archie Bunker sits down in his chair and exchanges witticisms with his wife. After the last quip, the laugh track roars. A pause. The laughter dies down. Archie Bunker gets up from his chair and exchanges insults with his son-in-law. The laugh track roars again. A viewer who missed the first set of quips can nevertheless appreciate the second. The pace is very slow. The time between jokes is filled with the laugh track, so that the comedians often seem to be waiting for the laughter to die down. Without these laugh tracks, situation comedies would seem slow and tedious. Commercials provide similar pauses; indeed, they are so useful that many public and cable stations, which don't use them, put "intermissions" into their longer programs.

All forms of TV programs are generally slow. The best examples are the soap operas. The details of the action are related to the audience in conversations: if Judy has an abortion she will mention this to Sue, who will tell her neighbor, Jane (adding that Judy's husband doesn't approve); Jane will then tell Beth (adding that she, Jane, has also had an abortion, but that her ex-husband doesn't know about it); Beth will tell Helen (adding that Jane's ex-husband is now Judy's husband); Helen will tell her mother-in-law, and so on. Because of the constant repetition of the information, a viewer who has missed a program, or part of it, can still keep up. As the details of Judy's life are revealed in the repetitive conversations, tangled plots (by television's standards) can be woven together. A faithful viewer, who knows that Judy's husband (and Jane's ex-husband) was once also Helen's lover can enjoy the story as a continuing saga. But even the most casual viewer can follow the surface action, and can get a glimpse of genuine sorrow, while making only a very small investment of attention.

The need for slowness and separability of

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scenes can also be observed in the broadcasting of sports. Television does best with sports in which the action is separated into a series of discrete plays, like football or baseball. The pace is further slowed by filling the time between plays with comments of sportscasters, who repeat and interpret what has happened. If asked, sportscasters describe their function as an explanatory one; but no professional athletic competitions have ever before felt it necessary to supply their fans with guides or interpreters. Viewers in the stadium or arena—who often can see the game less well than television viewers—get along without commentary. Sportscasters function, in truth, to make it possible for home viewers to give the game only intermittent attention. By raising their voices, sportscasters call attention to unusual plays. If the play was important, they repeat it on instant replay—"for those of you who might have missed it."

Sports with more continuous and sustained action, like hockey or soccer, do not televise well, although changes in the game's rules and frequent time-outs can be used to slow them down.

These examples indicate that the content of other media, when televised, must be transformed. Soap operas are not just televised romantic novels; since the viewer cannot put down the soap opera when interrupted, slack must be built in—in the form of repetitions—to make it interruptible. TV sports programs are not simply contests without the need to sit in uncomfortable arenas. TV dramas are not just staged plays brought into the home. They are different because they must be adapted to provide the interruptibility that television needs. This explains why made-for-television movies are never quite like "real" movies: they must obey television's "rules."

For two reasons—because TV has neither the right form nor the right audience setting—TV programs cannot arouse and maintain the emotional involvement of their viewers. Attempting to televise *Hamlet* is like trying to perform Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* using a seven-piece jazz combo, or baking a cake with a cement mixer: the instrument is not suited to the function it is asked to perform. But TV programs like *Starsky and Hutch,* which are suited to television's needs, should not be judged by the standards of the theater. *Starsky and Hutch* is designed to provide intermittent entertainment. This *Hamlet* cannot do.

Since there is no emotional involvement in the TV experience, there is always the danger that viewers will stop paying attention altogether. To keep their programs from degenerating into background noise, broadcasters use a variety of short-term attention-getting devices. These are most visible in commercials (which, to broadcasters, are the most important bits), but not limited to them. The simplest is to turn up the sound. Like an alarm clock, this gains everyone's attention. Music, jingles and humor work the same way; studies show that commercials using jingles are the best remembered. There are visual equivalents: zoom shots, shifts in focus, and the use of dizzying color.

Attention gained in this way is always short-lived. Viewers will look up momentarily to watch an ordinary-looking person being clobbered by a huge pugilist labeled ACID INDIGESTION. A moment later their attention wanders. They would never give attention to a half-hour program in which scientists presented evidence on which the products's claim is based. Even trained chemists who during their working hours are interested in the properties of antacids would not watch such a program.

- The best attention-getter available to dramatic programs is violence. Violence includes fast movement and loud noise: the car with squealing tires plunging down the street out of control, the screaming robbery victim, the exploding building. The violent scene catches the eye by combining shouting visuals and sound; if it is brief and well-done, a viewer who begins to watch it will remain attentive until the last punch or shuddering crash. Violent scenes are often presented before commercial breaks to "wake the viewers up." They are the best-remembered

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parts of such programs as *The Six Million Dollar Man, Kung-Fu,* and *Baretta.*

- Violence is ubiquitous on TV. More than 80 percent of the dramatic programs studied by the National Commission On The Causes and Prevention Of Violence contained violent scenes. The American Medical Association estimates that the average American child watches 18,000 murders on television before reaching the age of 18. Because it is such a useful attention-getting device, it is unlikely that violence will ever be entirely eliminated.

Using violence, broadcasters can call attention to parts of their programs; but they cannot hold the viewer's undivided attention. That is one reason home TV is not very good for educational uses. Nor is commercial TV a good medium for public affairs. Although most Americans now claim to get most of their information about politics from their sets, TV journalism, interruptible as all programming must be, can provide only very superficial coverage. The subject matter of American public life is complex; to understand a problem like unemployment requires considerable information about patterns of business, the supply of money, etc. Many important problems—like unemployment—are actually processes that continue over long periods of time, affect different parts of the country differently, and cannot easily be divided into separable units. There is nothing inherently dull about these problems. Many Americans deal with such matters during their working hours, and many more read political magazines. But politics requires attention that cannot be mustered during evening socializing, beer-drinking, and baby-sitting.

- In place of serious attention to politics, TV provides the half-hour news program. Since "[t]he audience doesn't want to sit for ten minutes to watch a well-done, well-written story, [but rather t]hey want ten seconds of the school crisis and ten seconds of Liz and Dick,"* news programs are made up of very brief stories, each little more than a headline, and most illustrated with videotape. A viewer who misses one can still understand the next.

Because they are familiar, they can often be grasped even by a viewer who gives them only partial attention. Thus, a film clip of the remains of an explosion may be set in Beirut, in South Africa, or in a New York City airport. But to a viewer who sees this film, and who doesn't hear the commentary (perhaps because he is on the phone), the picture carries its own partial message: the terrorists are at it again. Some stations give additional visual cues by using standardized symbols. a logotype of a clenched fist appears before stories about terrorism and a black cross or tombstone illustrates stories about traffic accidents. There is a great deal of repetition. The lead story is mentioned, as a headline, during the program's introduction; it is then discussed in detail, and, finally, mentioned again during the "recap" at the end. If the viewer missed the first report that there had been an earthquake in Guatemala, he will be able to deduce this information when a reporter, during a later story, says that the President called the earthquake a "tragedy," or when an expert explains that this is Guatemala's third major earthquake in a decade.

TV news content is heavy with familiar and uncomplicated "people" stories: the antics of movie stars or the shocking behavior of the teen-age sons of prominent people. An attempt is usually made to include happy stories (like the birth of quintuplets or the reunion of a five-generation family), but most "people" stories are unhappy. In news programs, as in drama, violence has impact. Murders, crime, and serious accidents are well covered. Even in other stories, violence may be emphasized. A story about a labor dispute, for example, may be accompanied by a film clip of a picketer striking a policeman (or vice versa) instead of film clips showing the negotiators. In politics, campaign stories may consist only of the insults exchanged by the candidates. (Shocking language is almost as good as violence.) But television rarely gives

*Walter Jackson, co-anchorman of the evening news program for CBS' Chicago station. Quoted in *Newsweek*, October 11, 1976, p. 78.

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any detail about the candidates' policy positions.

Since all of the staples of TV content were borrowed from other media—sitcoms and sitdramas from radio, serials from magazines, news from newspapers, and variety shows from vaudeville—it looks as if television has not developed distinctive programming of its own. But it has. *Starsky and Hutch,* "people" news stories, and certain team sports are suited to television, while lengthy political speeches and *Hamlet* are not. Television, by slowing down the pace of programs and by imposing its own conventions, transforms the content of other media. It is possible to speak of suitable and unsuitable television subjects, just as it is possible to speak of suitable and unsuitable music for the organ. In a sense, then, television's distinctive art is the art of adapting the content of other media to fit the constraints of the living room.

This means that television content does not vary. It may *look* like sports, or drama; it may *look* like the coronation ceremony of a king, or the funeral of a dictator. But in reality, it is TV. Viewed as sports, drama, or politics, TV programs provide appearances without the distinctive emotions with which they are usually associated. But viewed as *television*, the standards change. TV is whatever can be absorbed by a person while he is sitting with his feet up, a glass of beer in his hand, and a child competing for his attention.

Would reducing television's dependence on business alter this state of affairs? The answer is no. Reducing the number of commercials, or eliminating them, or holding them responsible for accuracy, may produce many good effects. With fewer commercials, society may perhaps be able to cut down on mindless consumerism. But this will not provide improved television content, as judged by the standards of the theater or the cinema.

TV will never be capable of truly detailed coverage of public affairs. But the fault is not in television's commercial bias. The fault is in what we require from home viewing. We would be much better off if we realized that TV's limits are the limits of the living room. Limited relaxation is possible there, if it can be managed between interruptions. To do anything more strenuous—to the mind, as well as to the body—we have to go outside. □

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The Problem of Pornography

The following articles are based on a recent discussion among our editors, led by Murray Hausknecht, on the topic of pornography in our society and the ensuing problems of social and cultural climate—and civil liberties.

Murray Hausknecht

For a walker through Times Square or the downtown areas of many American cities a stop for a newspaper means a confrontation with the tastelessness of *Screw* and *Hustler;* a glance at a record shop window discloses an album-cover photograph, reproduced on a rooftop billboard, of a bound woman, while a nearby movie marquee promotes the dubious delights of an X-rated movie featuring children. One is overcome by a sense that the texture of public life has become coarsened and that some natural boundary between public and private worlds is being wantonly violated by a barrage of pornography. It is hard to resist crying out, Enough!

The cry, though, is or can be a prelude to a call for censorship, and the uneasiness that thought produces is reinforced by the reality of prosecutions against porno-film actors and the publisher of *Hustler.* One's discomfort is increased by the recognition that such prosecutions gain legitimacy from our disgust with the daily encounter with pornography. All of which prompts the questions, What can be done? What ought to be done?

By pornography I mean any written or visual representation of sexual behavior—explicitly and vividly presented—whose sole intent is sexual arousal. By "erotic writing" or "erotica" I mean an explicit representation of sex within a context in which it is treated as part of the human experience and in which the sexual material is not used solely to stimulate arousal. (Throughout, it is to be understood that what is said about "writing" applies also to movies.) In short, erotic writing is work that tries to achieve the traditional end of art. However, erotica can be converted by the reader into pornography; that is, it can be used simply for the purposes of arousal.

Pornography is usually condemned because it is equated with obscenity, that which is dirty, shameful, and degrading. If, however, we do not accept such traditional beliefs about sex, then the mere fact that pornography stimulates sexual excitement cannot, by itself, be grounds for condemnation. Pornography is also accused of other evils, as in Irving Kristol's pronouncement that "pornography . . . is inherently and purposefully subversive of civilization and its institutions."[1] On a less Spenglerian level this translates into accusations that pornography

[1] *On the Democratic Idea in America,* (New York: Harper & Row, 1972), p. 40.

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causes a breakdown in sexual morals and the family, and encourages juvenile delinquency, sex crimes, and other perversions. Whether pornography does have these far-reaching consequences is an empirical question, a difficult enough problem even without the assumption that an end to civilization is "inherently and purposefully" intended. This evokes a picture analogous to the old stereotype of the bearded anarchist gleefully working on the bombs that will destroy the regime. But all one really need assume about the poor hack scribbling away is that he hopes someone will become excited.

The National Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, which completed its work in 1970, sponsored a number of research studies ranging from the quasi-experimental to opinion surveys, and consequently we are in a better position than previously to deal with the empirical question. The results must be accepted with more than the usual reservations, since the methodological difficulties of social-psychological research are compounded by the nature of the problem. Even when the effect may be observed by direct measurement of physiological changes, the Heisenberg Uncertainty Principle complicates matters: the instrumentation measuring sexual arousal tends to inhibit response. In addition, none of the "experimental" studies assessed the long-range effects of pornography, and, for obvious reasons, no studies involved children. Still, with all their limitations, the findings seem to justify the following propositions:

(1) Exposure to pornographic materials produces sexual arousal "in substantial proportions of males and females." Heterosexual materials rather than homosexual or sadomasochistic materials are more significant in producing arousal.

(2) Continued exposure to pornography results in satiation of arousal and interest.

(3) Established patterns of sexual behavior are not significantly altered by exposure to pornography. After exposure there is an increase in coital activity by those with an available sexual partner, but the effect disappears within 48 hours. Those without available partners or those who masturbate regularly show increases in masturbatory activity, but this too disappears within two days.

(4) Exposures to pornographic stimuli have little or no effect on "established attitudinal commitments regarding either sexuality or sexual morality."

(5) There is no relation between criminal sex offenses, other forms of crime, and juvenile delinquency and the use of pornography.[2]

Obviously, these findings can have only an indirect impact on popular beliefs about pornography. Research results by themselves no more inhibit attempts at censorships or legal prosecutions than scientific findings on race can by themselves eradicate prejudice and discrimination. It is possible to argue, though, that in the current cultural situation it is difficult to conceive of the antipornography forces mustering strength to bring back "the bad old days" when D.H. Lawrence and Henry Miller were under-the-counter items.

On the other hand, not withstanding the recent and rapid changes in attitudes toward sex, these very changes contribute to the strength of the antiabortion movement and the opposition to the Equal Rights Amendment. These antifeminist forces are reinforced by the zealous foes of pornography. The recent defeats of ERA, while not wholly a result of the fears and anxieties generated by "the sexual revolution," show how strong this opposition can be. The *Hustler* prosecution and that of the actors by district attorneys on the political make also indicate that traditional civil liberties problems have by no means been completely settled. Such legal actions have a "chilling effect" on free speech;

[2] U.S. Commission on Obscenity and Pornography, *The Report of the U.S. Commission on Obscenity and Pornography* (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1970), pp. 163-243. Further analyses of the research done for the Commission are reported in a special issue of the *Journal of Social Issues*, vol. 29, no. 3, 1973.

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they encourage self-censorship and caution among publishers and producers who are not a notably courageous lot.

Restrictions on anything resembling freedom of speech and thought obviously touch the most deep-seated sentiments of liberals and radicals. But more is at work here than mere political opinion, for the radical also tends to be attracted to a position on pornography and erotica like that of Paul Goodman. In one of his "utopian essays" Goodman starts from the premise that the need for pornography is a result of "a general repressive antisexuality" to which censorship contributes. But, he continues, we are living in a period of transition, a time when ideas about sex are breaking though the barriers of repression. We now require laws and attitudes that permit the once repressed drives "to reappear as themselves and come into their own equilibrium, according to organic self-regulation." It is necessary to allow art and artists to perform their traditional function of "dreaming forbidden thoughts, assuming the forbidden stances, and struggling to make sense." In the long run a free and uninhibited flow of erotica would help demolish sexual repression and, ultimately, the need for pornography.[3]

Utopian essays, by definition, deal with the long range, but life is always lived in the short run. Today we experience an almost uninhibited flow of explicit material that is more pornographic than erotic, and it is more likely to raise our hackles than our hopes for the future. We long for Goodman's prophecy of an end to repression to come true, but we worry about the consequences, between now and then, of the uncontrolled availability of pornography. Feminists, for example, worry about the image of women that pornography encourages, and sometimes find themselves unsympathetic to traditional civil liberties arguments and utopian visions. And so, in spite of political prejudices, one begins to pay closer attention to the arguments that can be made for restrictions on pornography.

[3] *Utopian Essays and Practical Proposals* (New York: Random House, 1962), pp. 55, 57.

One argument, just a step or two removed from a knee-jerk puritanism, is the reiteration of the traditional stereotypes of a direct relationship between pornography and unacceptable behavior—e.g., a viewing of *Deep Throat* encourages promiscuity. This simplistic view is modified by a second argument: findings like those of the Commission on Obscenity and Pornography overlook the long-range consequences; it is inconceivable that the widespread availability and use of pornography can have no effect on social institutions, the culture, and attitudes and behavior of people. So Kristol is convinced that it undermines civilization, while a novelist and critic like George P. Elliott believes that pornography is an attack on "society as such" because it subverts the institution of the family.[4] Such propositions often rest on a philosophical justification of censorship. The legitimacy of censorship, says Walter Berns, rests on "the positive role of law. This role finds law as the promoter of virtue, as a means to habituate to virtue . . . ."[5] Or, as he put it in a later article, there is a "necessity for the law to make a modest effort to promote good character."[6] The virtuous man, the person of good character, is one whose morality and conduct conform to the requirements of nature. In the deep background, then, are natural law theories that hold, in David Spitz's words (describing a position he does not himself accept), that freedom does not "involve a choice to act 'wrongly.'"[7]

One of the difficulties of assessing the argument about the long-run effects is that frequently the necessary distinction between pornography and erotica is not made. Elliott, for example, sees the danger to society as emanating from "erotic nihilists" like Henry

[4] *Conversions* (New York: Dutton, 1971), pp. 164-65.

[5] *Freedom, Virtue and the First Amendment* (Chicago: Henry Regenry Co.—Gateway Edition, 1965), p. 240.

[6] "Pornography and Democracy: The Case for Censorship," *Public Interest*, Winter 1971, p. 14.

[7] "Freedom, Virtue and the New Scholasticism," *Commentary*, October 1959, p. 314.

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Miller whose work has "literary value . . . enough to redeem its pornography but not enough to make one ignore its destructive intent."[8] Since it is work like Miller's that has such dire consequences, his novels must have some qualities not found in books filling the racks of "adult bookstores." Obviously, if Elliott is correct, it is erotic writing rather than pornography that subverts "society as such." But against this mere assertion of fact, there is the plausible argument that neither pornography nor erotic writing can have the effects claimed for them.

Pornography is concerned only with sexual arousal; it raises no questions about the significance of sex in the life of individuals or society. The pornographer concentrates on sex alone; he takes the everyday world in which sexual behavior occurs as given and unproblematic. An acceptance of the givenness of the world is a necessary condition for successful pornography, since the presumed pleasures to be derived from the representations of intercourse are hard to come by if one is distracted by discourse on the meaning and significance of human sexuality. Because sex is treated in isolation from all other aspects of life, its representation is apprehended as having no pertinence to the totality of a person's experience. Whatever values and attitudes toward sex a person brings to reading or viewing of pornography remains unchallenged by that experience. This accounts for the common and seemingly paradoxical reaction to porno movies—that they are sexually arousing and boring.

Changes in behavior that are stable and not simply the result of external coercions involve changes in beliefs and attitudes to which we must be persuaded. Persuasion transforms the ways of understanding oneself, the world about one, and the relationship between self and the world. In phenomenological terms, behavioral change requires a new construction of reality. It is precisely at this point that pornography fails: the construction of a new social reality is founded on social discourse while pornography is solely concerned with sexual intercourse.

Unlike pornography, art is concerned with exploring the relationships among people and their worlds with the aim of involving and moving the reader. When we identify with characters or adopt attitudes toward them we enter their world, and the more we are captured by the created world the greater the possibility that it can affect ideas and beliefs in the real world. In effect, being moved by a work of art means entering into discourse with "another" social reality, and such discourse can make our reality problematic. Whatever power "erotic nihilists" can exercise rests on that function of art. But the power is easily exaggerated.

Anthony Burgess, himself a novelist, noted in an essay on pornography that "didactic works" like *Mein Kampf* and *Das Kapital* have had more influence than books "which merely represent life, no matter how one-sidedly."[9] Art does not mean to instruct or persuade, which is not to say that art cannot affect ideas and beliefs or that "books make no difference." But very few works of art in any era have had significant historical effects (as opposed to idiosyncratic effects on individuals). *Uncle Tom's Cabin,* for example, is said to have influenced feelings about slavery, but one must take into account that the novel built on already existing abolitionist sentiment. To put the matter baldly: art has an effect only when people are prepared to be affected. The effect art can have in these circumstances is to support and perhaps accelerate changes already underway in the society and culture.

How limited is the independent power of art alone can be appreciated in our present situation. If we ask what kind of writing has had the most effect on "the sexual revolu-

[8] Elliott, *op. cit.*, p. 164.

[9] "What is Pornography," in Douglas A. Hughes, *Perspectives on Pornography* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1970), p. 5. This anthology also contains versions of the Goodman and Elliott articles.

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tion," it is clear that "didactic works" like those of Masters and Johnson, *The Joy of Sex,* and the mountains of print produced by ardent feminists fiercely dedicated to changing the hearts and minds of women and men have exercised the critical influence. Or, to put the same point differently, books like *Uncle Tom's Cabin* owe their influence less to their quality as works of art than their intent to instruct and persuade.

In the absence, then, of empirical evidence and plausible arguments one must remain skeptical of the presumed long-run consequences of pornography and erotica. But even if one were to grant that they undermine civilization and social institutions, the justification for censorship rests on grounds unacceptable to liberals and radicals.

To say that pornography and erotic writing endanger institutions is to say that they affect beliefs and opinion about the proper way to organize social relationships, about the appropriate means for accomplishing the tasks necessary to maintain society. These are *political* questions, and censorship would prohibit exposure to a full range of politically relevant perspectives. To defend censorship is to assume that existing social arrangements represent the best of all possible worlds, or, since we already know what the proper relationships among people ought to be, citizens need not be distracted by wrong and incorrect views. Even if one only believes that the present arrangements are more bearable than what would result from the unrestricted availability of pornography, our historical experience suggests that censorship more often than not kills what it is ostensibly designed to protect. Those prejudiced in favor of freedom must reject anything that interferes with people's right to free political choice.

Can nothing be done, then, to secure ourselves against the daily offense of pornography?

The arguments about pornography and its effects apply only to adults and not to children. Our lack of knowledge about its effects on children combined with the plausibility of arguments that they are at greater risk from pornography than adults favor retaining the present restrictions on children's access to it. Similarly, the use of children in pornographic movies can and ought to be prosecuted under child abuse laws. Beyond this we shall have to be satisfied with more limited goals.

All cities have zoning laws that separate, for example, industrial from residential land use. For most people pornography is like the noxious stink of a glue factory, and just as we locate the factory away from homes so we can zone to restrict our public encounters with pornography. We can limit the location and number of establishments dealing solely with pornography.

A zoning ordinance designed to protect residential areas from "adult bookstores" and porno movie houses would restrict them to business and entertainment districts where anonymity has always cloaked the pursuit of anomalous pleasures. In cities that have escaped the blight of urban renewal there are residential neighborhoods overlapping these districts; some are traditional "slums" while others are "respectable" middle-class areas. Residents of these neighborhoods, as well as those whose occupations bring them to the center of the city, will be more exposed to the offensiveness of pornography than others. But this location has always had similar disadvantages. Neighborhoods are "slums," in part, because their inhabitants already have to contend with such social pollutants as prostitution and drugs, and some of the most exclusive and expensive neighborhoods of Manhattan overlook the smoke and brutal ugliness of Consolidated Edison's generating plants. Similarly, in some cities pornography will defile public places to a greater extent than in others. When a city like New York tries to attract tourists as a great place to visit it encourages the trade in pornography. After all, the attraction of the metropolis always has

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been the promise of pleasures unavailable at home.

This modest proposal implies that here as elsewhere in the life of the society, we must bear the consequences of the beliefs that define us as political beings. Just as the commitment to freedom of speech or due process of law means that we put up with a flow of ethnic and racial scurrilities and the occasional freeing of an obvious criminal, so too we must continue to contend with the burden of pornography. Our consolation is the austere one that the alternative to freedom would prove rather more burdensome. □

Lionel Abel

Malinowski, writing some years back on the sexual life of savages, told us that when nothing else could stimulate them, the natives of the Trobriand Islands often told sexual jokes. Apparently, this was their last—as it was their best—recourse against continuing ennui. The anthropologist did not make it quite clear whether, when bored, they turned directly to stories and jokes about sex, or only after other efforts to raise their spirits had failed. But if it can be said that under certain circumstances they turned to pornography—the word "pornography" is perhaps not quite applicable here—in any case it must be noted that they did not contribute to the advancement of any specialists in pornography. Certainly they did not aid forces destructive of their society every time they felt tired of life and looked to stories or jokes about sex to help them back into it.

From which we may learn two things: (1) There are life-enhancing as well as life-destroying ways of referring to sex, and the sexual act. (The life-enhancing quality of references to sex in Shakespeare and, most especially, in Rabelais can hardly be covered by the terms "pornography" and "obscenity," which properly describe the kind of literary and photographic material regularly published in *Hustler* and *Playboy* magazines.) And (2), in the Trobriand Island cultures, references to sex were allowable under particular conditions subject to social opinion. There were no quarrels among the people of the islands, I take it, as to the exact definition of pornography; the tribesmen knew intuitively when and under what circumstances it was proper and even right to talk amusingly of sex.

Now the kind of pornography we encounter while walking through Times Square, and in the downtown areas of most American cities—quite well described, by the way, though with insufficient indignation, by Murray Hausknecht—has no relation whatever to any positive life value to which I, or Mr. Hausknecht, for that matter, could point. These sexual displays seem exclusively directed to making life seem worthless to anyone who still feels any kind of awe or reverence for it. What the pornographic literature and spectacles in these areas indicate is not at all that certain practices are now socially acceptable, but that society has withdrawn from certain parts of our cities and relinquished these to forces that are either purely commercial or purely criminal.

Murray Hausknecht fears that protests against pornographic literature and shows might lead to a censorship that would also be directed against more genuine kinds of communication. No doubt censorship is a dangerous instrument, and one that has often been misused. It is required, though, if social opinion lacks force, as it certainly does right now, to control pornography. Years ago

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people would have been ashamed to be found reading *Hustler,* which now awaits you every time you visit the barber shop. If society is nonexistent in some areas, then, of course, there has to be legal action against pornography, unless we can be reconciled to the horrors of downtown America.

Mr. Hausknecht has referred to "knee-jerk" Puritan reactions. I don't have the faintest notion of what he can have in mind. I doubt very much if there is any kind of Puritanism now extant that can be properly so characterized. And I would accuse Mr. Hausknecht of knee-jerk reactions to anything said by Irving Kristol, even when what Mr. Kristol has said is perfectly sound. Apparently Mr. Kristol has expressed the opinion that pornography is destructive of civilized life. Objecting, Mr. Hausknecht asks, Where is the empirical evidence? Now the question is naive. We can hardly subject civilizations to controlled experiment so as to determine their tolerance or intolerance of pornographic displays and obscene literature. Mr. Kristol can of course speak for himself, but when he says pornography is destructive of civilization he may have meant merely precisely what Mr. Hausknecht means when he inveighs against the sexual displays on Times Square: such displays are not consistent with civilized life as we know it. And I would give one more argument. The idea expressed by Paul Goodman (he is cited on this very point by Murray Hausknecht) that our civilization is sexually repressive conveys, to me at least, the implication that the maintenance of our civilization requires the censorship of pornography. Now it was against such censorship that Goodman initiated his "dirty speech" campaign. So the very idea with which Goodman justified his promotion of "dirty speech" was that communications of this type were needed to undermine our "civilization" as Mr. Kristol has inferred.

A contemporary Spanish radical, Tierno Gaván, has written movingly on the trivialization of life in modern times, noting especially the trivializing of the erotic. This last he lays up to the current trend to antiasceticism. He is not an ascetic himself, and he is not in favor of asceticism—he wants us to accept our destiny, which, as he sees the matter, must necessarily take the form of antiasceticism and trivialization. But we do not have to be concerned here with what Tierno recommends. What is interesting about the writer is that he has not joined the chorus of those who find modern Western civilization too "repressive" for their taste—Tierno rightly finds it antiascetic and, as a consequence, trivializing.

Now one of the most important effects of pornography is to trivialize the erotic. Is that to be our destiny? Certainly it is one that is in line with most psychoanalytic thinking, with the outcry against any kind of inhibition, and with the high regard for everything low now favored in intellectual circles. I think that Murray Hausknecht is speaking for all these trends when he tells us that radicals naturally tend to protest against inhibitions of any kind. In fact, the assertion is quite false. Radicals, if we are to include among them revolutionaries also, have in most instances been rather ascetic, and represented asceticism ideologically. It was not the aristocrats of England who closed down the theaters in the 17th century. It was not the courtiers of Versailles, but Robespierre, the social radical, who thought the pursuit of sexual pleasures contrary to the good of the Republic. And coming closer to the present time, didn't we hear it said that Castro prohibited sex among the men and women fighting with him in the Sierra Maestra?

I do not accept the view that the trivialization of sex is something for which we are inescapably destined. Here, I think, one has to be certain of one's values rather than of any particular set of facts. The trend is certainly toward trivialization, but this trend, too, can pass. And here we touch on what may be one of the deepest antinomies of the present order of things. There are many like Mr. Hausknecht, who would rather not censor literature or displays because they think censorship itself uncivilized. But on the other hand, the trivialization of the erotic is also barbarous, for the barbarian may be de-

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scribed as the diminished man, the one whose experience of life (and sex) has been attenuated. Civilization and trivialization may, in fact, be incompatible.

Joyce's *Ulysses* is often mentioned by defenders of pornography because *Ulysses,* too, was at one time prohibited. Now when I first read the novel—it was in the early 30s—I did admire Molly Bloom's "dirty speech" and unconscious soliloquizing at the book's close. In fact I admired her whole soliloquy for its uninhibited expressiveness. Today I think less of it. Certainly it is not equal to the speeches of Cleopatra in Shakespeare, or of Phaedra in Racine's great play. All the same it remains an extraordinary outpouring of thoughts and feelings. We know, of course, that Molly Bloom had not seen Times Square or the downtown of any contemporary American city. Given her common sense and feeling for life, had she seen Times Square as Mr. Hausknecht and I have seen it, she would, I believe, have expressed herself quite differently at the end of *Ulysses.* Instead of her forthright "yes," she would as forcefully have repeated "no." Molly, go ahead now. You've seen the city:

> And I thought not them but someone else and I could never ask any of them with my eyes to ask again No and if anyone asked me I would say No to just say No and I would not put my arms around anyone or draw anyone down let no one feel my breasts No and let their hearts be fucking like mad and No I said No I will not No

□

George P. Elliott

On the basic issues, I pretty much agree with Hausknecht.

(1) Pornography is offensive. However, the Goodmanesque benefits supposed to accrue from removing all restrictions on it seem to me not just dubious, as they seem to Hausknecht, but foolish, since I can't imagine that dirty sex can be freed without also releasing those other things, some of them very dangerous, with which it is involved; but let that pass.

(2) Censorship is even more offensive. However, as an artist I note that nearly all artists, in nearly all ages and countries, have worked under social restrictions of varying intensity, some of these in the form of overt censorship laws, and that occasionally these very prohibitions inform the work of art, sometimes to its advantage. *Don Quixote,* one of the supreme stories, would not be as it is unless Cervantes had worked under a Most Catholic censorship, and to imagine that he would have told that story better had he been unrestrained is mere liberal fantasy—other, yes, but not better. But the whole question of the relationship between artist and censorship is too intricate to go into here; besides, it is only one of many free-speech issues and not the determining one.

(3) Therefore, let us protect society at large, not by forbidding public pornography outright, but by sequestering it. Agreed.

My disagreements with Hausknecht have to do with the complexity of the issues. It seems to me that he finds the whole matter so distasteful that he simplifies it unrealistically.

For one thing, he does not deal with the difficulty of sequestering mass-distributed pornography—books, magazines, movies,

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television. It can be done, but doing so involves much more governmental machinery than he (or I) would like or than the ACLU thinks the First Amendment allows; by comparison, maintaining a red-light district is simple.

Additionally, he makes much too neat a division between pornography and "erotic" art. In reality, some valid works of art contain parts that are simple pornography, and there are many—very many—borderline instances where the categories are most unclear. No rules can be formulated that will guide law-enforcement officers. The distinctions must be made case-by-case, and this calls for magistrates of some sort, whether bureaucrats or, as I prefer, boards of censors. A nasty business all around; but, if you are going to sequester, you must have someone to say "this is to be sequestered, that not," and under this necessity I think citizens' committees less likely to abuse their power than minor bureaucrats. But, whatever the best answer, Hausknecht evades the whole question.

He also proposes the opinion that true art does not instruct or persuade. No doubt in esthetic discussions true art does not. But actual art in the real world often does. Dostoevsky, Dickens, Shaw, Brecht, Pound —they are never didactic in intent and effect? Come off it. But even if an artist has no didactic intention, I believe—though I cannot demonstrate with sociological surveys, I believe, as most societies believe, hence the restrictions they erect—I believe that the effect of art may be not purely and tidily esthetic but also moral, obscurely, remotely, unprovably moral, modifying attitudes and thereby behavior. Furthermore, pornography has sometimes been used as an instrument of didactic purpose: Sade. The Marquis announced himself an enemy of society; his own society (first under the Monarchy, then under the Revolution except for a brief period during the Terror, then under the first Empire) saw him as an enemy and so treated him and his writings; his works, of which pornography is an essential ingredient, are powerful antisocial, immoral weapons. He is the extreme case, and though, as Burgess says, no novelist is as efficacious as Hitler or Marx, Sade is efficacious enough to be worrisome. I am in favor of sequestering his books, not because they do no harm, but because all that is involved in totally censoring them is likely to do more harm.

In addition to these simplifications, Hausknecht weakens his case by what I conceive to be some wrong emphases. He minimizes the power of pornography; it is a low, bad, unclean art, but an art that is of some intrinsic power and is sometimes put to the service of a vile persuasion. He leaves unmentioned what I take to be a self-evident fact, that any healthy society, including one as libertarian as ours, protects itself against such outrages against what it holds to be decent custom as public pornography; I know that this opinion is respectable and that respectability has long been tarnished as bourgeois, but, like a good many other things that radicals dismiss as bourgeois, to sequester pornography, like sequestering prostitution, seems to me civilized, whether bourgeois or not, and to let pornography run rampant, as we now do, largely unrestrained and even condoned to the extent of allowing it to be advertised and discussed with approval in the public press, seems to me decadent, a classic instance of that license which is liberal excess. Most important, Hausknecht exaggerates the malignant power of censorship, as though any and every censorship were as bad as the totalitarian variety; for example, it is by no means true on the face of it that "censorship more often than not kills what it is ostensibly designed to protect," though a possible argument might hold that this has been true in the parish of history we inhabit, the Enlightened West in which censorship as such has come to be seen by many as an abusive instrument of oppression rather than as an ordinary function of government, subject to abuse of course but not so bad when generally agreed upon.

All the same, in the matter of what to do about pornography now, Hausknecht's case is my case. □

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Cynthia Fuchs Epstein

In the small Ohio city where I used to work, it was common knowledge that every month or so the American Legion would show "dirty" movies. Members of the post would gather, and after the flag had been saluted and the padre had blessed the meeting and (ostentatiously) left the hall, all would settle down for an evening of beer and stag films. No one in the community, not even their wives or parents, openly objected. The Legion practice in southern Ohio was probably not very different from that in other areas. It was as American as motherhood and apple pie.

No doubt, many functions were served by men gathering in this fashion; almost tribal, a prototypical ritual of collective conscience according to the gospel of Emile Durkheim. Men and their brothers engaging in forbidden games, analogous to the secret societies in preliterate groups whose rituals serve to band men of maturity together, to initiate adolescent men to their ranks, and to set themselves apart from women. Practices that underscore men's particularity, often to their hierarchical advantage.

One might even argue that when pornography is legalized and publicly offered, it is no longer offered in a form that serves the "*we*ness" of community but rather contributes to alienation and anomie. Pornography for the individual and not the group causes sex to become an anonymous experience. (A colleague has even instructed me that the best way to watch a pornographic movie is alone; to bring a friend is to introduce an element of "relationship," which dilutes or confuses the total porn experience.)

But perhaps we shouldn't simplistically sentimentalize pornography as a positive expression of group solidarity. We know, after all, that what is functional for the in-group may precipitate antagonisms to the out-group. What are the further consequences of pornography? Whom does it serve? Whom does it help? Whom does it harm?

We do not know much about the answers. Only the crudest measures have been used and I question the way the questions have been conceptualized and put. Sociologist Ned Polsky informs me that the incidence of child molestation went down in Denmark with the ending of all restrictions on pornography. He has argued that pornography provides the opportunity for persons to act out sexual needs vicariously or through fantasy that defuses possible antisocial expression. If this is so, the case for unlimited pornographic expression has some merit. Yet, one may ask, how truly related are the factors in this presumed causal relationship? As far as I know, no social scientist has ever done community studies to see what are the consequences of porn experiences for the "normal population," outside a laboratory setting. No one studied what happened to those American Legionnaires in Ohio after their monthly meetings, but I can speculate on what investigators would have found. Some probably managed to supress their aroused urges and some probably were put straight to bed, victims of the evening's beer. However, we can infer from findings of the 1970 Commission on Pornography that some, sexually aroused, mated with their wives with renewed vigor. And some, (we are discovering this with alarming frequency) may have drunkenly beaten the wives who wouldn't. (The courts deny it is rape if the husband forces sex on his wife.) Others may have mused through the week about that pert waitress in the diner who is always really "asking for it anyway" and may have tried a tickle or some remarks. I don't think that even regression analysis will tell us whether the porn movies might have contributed to the events surmised above, or the drink, or the "we" spirit of the boys getting together without the women.

As I interview people whose opinions I value on the perplexing problem of censorship and freedom and pornography, which led me to these series of reflections, I find that

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some of my best male friends and colleagues (who are hardly Mr. Middle America in their intellect or taste) turn out to be porn-movie regulars. These are men of sensitivity, of civil libertarian mind, who write and act in their private lives as committed feminists. For them, in varying degrees, porn is a voyage into erotica; a way of touching base with their elemental being; a lift from a world of words and abstractions; a diversion or dream. They are not turned mean by exposure to pornography but are turned on or off to sexuality, depending on whether they've experienced the porn as "good" or "bad." They argue for license as freedom and contend that expression of sexuality in any form (save that which depicts and uses children) opens and expands the individual and collective opportunity structure.

If they were in fact models of most men, or if 95 percent (or 80 percent or 50 percent) of the legionnaires were like them, I could easily subscribe to unqualified freedom. I find fault in their reasoning although I concede they are accurate in part.

As Murray Hausknecht points out, there is porn, and there is porn that is erotica. There is the not so bad old stuff such as *Fannie Hill* and the work of Frank Harris, there is "literature" such as *Lady Chatterly's Lover*. There are also the X-rated movies in sections such as New York's 42nd Street, the monthly perusal of *Playboy*, a skim of *Penthouse* at the barber's, and glances at the covers of *Hustler* and similar magazines at the news stand.

The movies seen by my academic friends turn out to be not bad politically. Indeed, one colleague assures me that the movies he sees depict an equal enthusiasm by women and men for the satisfaction of erotic pleasures. Yet what of the pornographic literature and media that bears a message of inequality and exploitation? Take *The Story of O* and even the high art of Henry Miller, which the feminist community decries as debasing to women and evocative of ugly images regarding them. What of pornography that exploits the weak? Most of the colleagues whose wisdom I've sought claim not to be attracted to whips and chains and don't come much into contact with porn based on pleasure through brutality.

But there is a large business in pornography that depicts exploitation and brutalization of women, and men (though to a lesser degree). Pornography doesn't originate these views but it does aid and abet them. It legitimates a set of attitudes for a public unfortunately prepared to subscribe to the notion that pain can be pleasure, particularly on the part of women. This view, grounded in folk culture and a corrupted Freudian psychology, has serious and dangerous political overtones.

In the absence of knowing just how much pornography is to blame, but suspecting its impact, I would like to curtail expression of certain kinds of messages that demean and hurt groups of people. Because I am for nonsexist terminology in text books and against the media presentation of black men and women as shuffling, illiterate, lazy and inept, or of Jews as crafty and avaricious, I am also against porn movies, television programs, and magazines that portray women—and men—as victims who love their victimization.

It is argued that censorship is dangerous because the censors are not qualified to make judgments. But those who question the qualifications of the censors—and who deny that *anyone* is qualified to censor—exercise standards of judgment in their everyday lives and indeed often make their living by making judgments.

These same persons, who deny any right to judge the presentation of sexual matter, impose standards of excellence in English composition, piano playing, or research techniques in their own fields. Outside their fields, they often express fury about bad films, theater, art, and home decoration. Who shall judge, they ask, and in the next moment they are judging the worthiness of a political candidate, the system of Justice in the U.S., or when it became decent to travel in Spain or buy a Volkswagen. In fact, they judge and censor the use of poor grammar in texts, the

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behavior they consider inappropriate, and the spread of ideas they consider to be abhorrent.

Every society imposes standards of taste, of morality, and of behavior. One may not strike another person; to do so is to commit the crime of assault. One may not falsely accuse another person to his or her detriment; to do so is to commit the crime of libel. It is not considered a limitation of one's personal freedom to be denied the right to freely express anger and hatred of a type that is detrimental to the health of society. Many otherwise responsible citizens have opposed such community measures as mandatory schooling, innoculation, fluoridation of the water, and prohibitions on dumping of raw sewage into public water. Which side were we on? Somehow any restriction on pornography is symbolic to some of an end to freedom of speech and an end to poetry and beauty.

Yet it is within the nature of social life to permit freedom in some areas and not others, to judge the cost of freedom and of its restrictions, and to make decisions about what social good may be served. We are capable of deciding to teach Bellow and not Irving Wallace in a course on the modern novel and surely we can decide to retain James Joyce and not *Hustler*. Many aspects of the good society entail decisions for less freedom and more restrictions. I can think of some right off: restrictions on cars that use large quantities of gasoline, tomatoes that are gassed to ripeness, possession of guns, littering, cigarette advertising, and the playing of transistor radios on public beaches. I also think it would not be too great a denial of freedom of personal expression or art in America to prohibit films indicating that the highest form of sensuality is to hack up your lover as the grande finale of the sex act. I believe we should censor pornography that insults, defames, and encourages assault on people, men or women. I believe that words and pictures have power. I fear the point of view that is insensitive to the implications of the pornography that is grounded in society's tolerance of brutality toward women or men. Clever as we are, I think we can work out a way to differentiate between the pornography that is bad for our culture, ourselves and our families, and that which is a frolic into the world of sensuality or even a tolerable vulgarity.

We've all marched to ban the bomb and to prevent radioactive fall-out even though some scientists said it wasn't clear how much fall-out was injurious to the health. Perhaps there's something to be said for an ounce of prevention in matters of the psyche. □

Irving Howe

My response to pornography is not so much to be socially alarmed as imaginatively disheartened. I don't know what damage, if any, it does to society or the future generations. I don't know if it encourages rape or stimulates perversion. I don't know if it threatens the family. But when I walk along 42nd Street in New York City and pass the peep-hole joints, the hard-core movie houses, the shabby bookstores, I find myself growing depressed. Is *this* what humanity, or even a portion of it, has come to in the late years of the 20th century?

The association of sex with brutal violence, the ideologizing of sadomasochism, the reduction of love to snickering mechanics, the fixation upon bodily organs that in their photographic enlargement can seem as disgusting as Swift said they were—all these point to some profound derangement of life that no one, to my knowledge, has fully explained as yet. Why should men, even the "rejects" of our society, find pleasure in all this? Or do they find pleasure?

Before worrying about "what to do" with regard to pornography, I'd like to know a good deal more about it. The prevalent liberal assumption has been that pornography is a by-product of repression, sexuality twisted and sickened into pathology. But there seems

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in recent decades to have occurred a decline in social repression, yet the interest in pornography has visibly grown. To which, in turn, the usual answer is that a partial release of repressive mechanisms brings, not immediate health, but an outburst of the symptoms of the disease caused by the repression. This is an argument hard to check, impossible to refute. Suppose it isn't true? In any case, who knows?

The conclusion from the liberal premise is that we must go all the way toward removing social restraints upon sexuality, even if many of the immediate consequences are unattractive. There can surely be no serious return to older modes of repression, denial or even discipline—to speak of a return to Victorianism is to indulge in a fantasy or, at best, a metaphor.

My guess is that democratic societies probably have no choice but to go along with this outlook, ragged as it is and uncertain as we may be about its premises. Still, the thought must haunt one: Suppose we go "all the way" (how does one do that?) toward the release of socially enforced repression, and what if then we still don't enter a time of shared health and well-being but instead witness a growth of the debasing, corrupt, inhumane values and tastes upon which pornography feeds?

SO I WALK along 42nd Street and, seeing what one sees there, I remember Trotsky's expectation, at the end of his book *Literature and Revolution*, that mankind would yet rise to the levels of Goethe, Beethoven, and Marx. It's not a program I find entirely attractive, nor is there much evident need to worry about it; but still . . . the sheer moral ugliness of the porn scene, the waste and distortion it suggests of human capacity—how can that be reconciled with social hopes? I find 42nd Street more destructive of my morale as a socialist than all the neoconservative polemics of the last 30 years.

Still, the argument for censorship doesn't seem persuasive. Does anyone remember Prohibition? At this point in history, after all we have tasted of the age of totalitarianism, how can anyone suppose that the possible benefits of censorship could outweigh the probable dangers?

Which isn't to say that certain modes of social protection might not be considered. If you want to go into one of those joints for $5 and see what you see and do what you do there, I don't propose to stop you. But I see no reason why I or my kids should be *forced* to look, when we walk along the streets, at the stuff that delights you and disgusts me. Go to the porn movie but don't oblige me to look at its stills just because I'm walking by. Get your *Hustler* in a brown paper wrapper, but don't oblige me to be hustled by it just because there's a newstand round my corner.

Such a limited management may be feasible, I'm not sure. But it doesn't begin to get at the deeper problem, the endlessly depressing question of why so many people yield themselves to the wretched stuff. □

David Spitz

Only salacious individuals are likely to deny that pornography is a serious problem. It offends many people, and in a particularly objectionable way, because some pornographic displays are often unavoidable. But people are offended by many things, and unless it can be shown that a distasteful item or practice adversely affects their interests and not merely their sentiments, or stands in a necessary (causal) relationship to criminal conduct, or seriously impairs rather than marginally troubles a community's quality of life—none of which (with respect to pornography) has yet been conclusively demonstrated—we should hesitate to meet that practice by censorship and other legal

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sanctions rather than by moral and social disapprobation.

It is of course a familiar stratagem, perhaps derived from our Puritan heritage, to seek to exorcise an evil by legislating against it. But evil is not easily or always eradicated by political fiat, and the use of legal instrumentalities may introduce still greater evils. It may be useful to recall some of these potential (I think highly probable) dangers.

First, who will be the censors—an elegant word for petty bureaucrats—who will distinguish "obscene" from acceptable literature (books, magazines, films, plays, etc.), observing the careful distinction drawn by sober thinkers like Murray Hausknecht between "erotica" and "pornography" and employing standards that yield clarity of meaning and ease of administration rather than extensive and bewildering judicial wrangling?

If censorship is really to work—and here I urge a rereading of Milton's *Areopagitica*—the censors must begin by cataloguing and proscribing all scandalous works already in print, prohibit the importation of all foreign writings until they have been examined and approved, expurgate those works that are partly useful and excellent and partly pernicious, and require all new materials to be submitted prior to publication. Such arduous tasks require censors of unusual quality and diligence, and very many of them to boot. Where will we find them?

By the very nature of the task they are likely to be, as Milton argued, second- or third-rate minds, "illiterate and illiberal individuals" who will refuse their sanction to any work containing views or expressions at all above the level of "the vulgar superstition." Men and women of worth would obviously refuse such an assignment as tedious and unpleasant, and as an immense forfeiture of time and of their own studies. Such censors as we would be likely to get would be a constant affront to serious (for I worry not about scurrilous) writers, and could only do more harm than good.

Second, does legislation in matters of morality produce significant compliance? Can we safely ignore the American experience with laws designed to curb or eliminate prostitution, gambling, the sale and consumption of intoxicating beverages, the use of marijuana and other drugs, and the like? Such legislation has not only been ineffectual. It has created classes of criminals where none existed before; it has contributed to (if not encouraged and perhaps required) the growth of organized crime, including smuggling, the black market, and police corruption; it has promoted a general contempt for, and widespread disobedience of, law; and it has in unacceptable ways invaded the realm of privacy.

Third, is not legislation that seeks to suppress or discourage pornography through heavy taxation intrinsically discriminatory? Will this do more than deny it only to the poor? Is it not enough to torture the limits of liberty? Must we also attack the principle of equality?

A final point. Those who—like the Irving Kristols and Herbert Marcuses of this world—would invoke the law to repress what they do not like mistake the very nature of the goodness they affirm. They would impose their "right" morality on others, but—even if their morality is "right," which is surely contestable—they forget that law as a means of coercion does not ensure but inhibits the truly moral act, which is the free and responsible choice of right action. One is not good when he acts on a choice delegated to others. Indeed, one is then less than human. For what does it mean to be a person, a good person, if not that one himself chooses between good and evil, virtue and vice, truth and falsehood? Those who would deny him that choice, who insist instead that he forsake his reason and his right to free decision-making and place his conscience into their custody, demand that he cease to be a mature and responsible individual. Where, then, do evil and presumption reside? □

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Murray Hausknecht

A Rejoinder

Lionel Abel seems to suggest that, if only I were more indignant, the way he and I react to Times Square could be taken as a standard of "civilized life as we know it." That my tastes and behavior are a measure of civilization is a powerfully attractive idea, but I fear that it is the road to madness and, politically speaking, concedes too much to the Robespierre within us all.

What distinguishes a Robespierre is not his specific beliefs but that he *knows* what is "contrary to the good of the Republic"; that he confounds "civilization" with his own values. The difference between a Robespierre and the rest of us is that he can and does use the power of the state to enforce *his* certainties. Lurking within all of us, however, is a willingness to impose, given half a chance, *our* certainties on others.

This Robespierre beneath the skin peeks out at us in the comments of Abel, Cynthia Epstein, and George P. Elliott. Censorship, says Abel, is required, because now "social opinion lacks force" and "society is nonexistent in some areas." Even if we accept these as meaningful terms of discourse, it is clear that what is not being enforced is only Abel's notion of what "social opinion" should be or Elliott's idea of what "decent custom" ought to be. To say that "society is nonexistent" is to assume that mere anarchy rules and then, "of course," there must be "legal action against pornography." Similarly, Epstein knows what is "detrimental to the health of a society" and does not hesitate to list "the decisions for less freedom and more restrictions" needed for "the good society." Even when she is less certain—"without knowing just how much pornography is to blame, but suspecting its impact"—she is prepared to employ the full power of the state against it.

The Robespierre within is encouraged by a moral indignation that often feeds on empty words. A term like "civilization" as used by Irving Kristol refers to something more than Abel's standards of civility in human relationships. Its connotation embraces art, science, philosophy, technology, social institutions—that complex social and cultural entity characteristic of a society or historical era. Abel is correct, therefore, in saying that when it is used in this global fashion without further specification no statement about it can be proven or disproven. (When confronted with such vacuity it is useful to naively inquire about the Emperor's clothes.) Yet the vision conjured up by the notion of "civilization" engulfed by pornography further inflames the sense of outrage that justifies a readiness to take extreme measures.

Although outrage must command due respect—it is, after all, a sign of moral commitment—it tends to provoke an impatience that overrrules our customary good sense. Surely it is Epstein's moral indignation that causes her to say because we "are capable of deciding to teach Bellow and not Irving Wallace . . . we can decide to retain James Joyce and not *Hustler*." Our ability to make judgments is not the issue; humans, if nothing else, are clever, distinction-making, categorizing beings. But it is one thing to omit Irving Wallace from a course on the modern novel and another to bring the full majesty of the law against *Hustler*. Good sense demands that when we consider the latter possibility we first carefully attend to the kind of questions suggested by David Spitz rather than the demonic action of a Robespierre.

One reason we tend to overlook these questions is our readiness to use the power of the state to deal with the evils arising from capitalist economic institutions. It is historically demonstrable that the vast inequalities of capitalist society limit freedom, the ability to make choices. Using the power of the state to mitigate the effects of capitalism is an attempt to extend the range of freedom.

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Bringing state power to bear on a phenomenon like pornography is an entirely different matter. Not only are we uncertain about the effects of pornography but, as Spitz suggests, the use of the law "inhibits . . . the free and responsible choice of right action." In this sphere the power of the state limits human freedom rather than enhancing it.

The artist has to contend not only with Robespierre but with the urge to teach. Elliott incorrectly assumes that I deny the intent is present. Its presence is most apparent when the writer surrenders to it and we know precisely what it is we are being instructed in and persuaded to. Sade and Pound, who in the Cantos instructs us on Social Credit policies and tries to persuade us to a hatred of Jews, are cases in point. But who, besides those who wished to be, have been instructed or persuaded by them? The artist is most likely to have an effect when the didactic intent is controlled by and subordinated to aesthetic demands. Brecht, no doubt, has affected individuals, but surely they were not instructed by him in Marxist doctrine or persuaded to membership in the Communist party. It is because the relationship between the artist's intent, his actual work, and its effects remains mysterious that literary criticism prospers.

Elliott is correct, of course, in pointing out that I ignored some difficulties in the proposal to zone pornography. Still, he may be overstating some of these difficulties. Categorization, no matter how clever we are, will always create "borderline instances where the categories are most unclear"—that is one foundation of the legal profession's prosperity. It is a problem not unique to the distinction between pornography and other work. Nor does the proposal to zone pornography imply that the police will make the decisions in disputed instances; the idea of zoning suggests a different body. The proposal assumes that once the X-rated movie and the material that normally appears in "adult bookshops" are limited to a few sections of the city there will be fewer complaints about pornography and significantly less demand for complete censorship. Zoning would still leave us with the "moral ugliness" of pornography, but in an imperfect world that is preferable to the certainties imposed on us by a Robespierre. □

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Jack Jones

Depth Conservationism: A Post-Marxist Ideology?

> Paradise is a park, where only brutes, not men, can remain. . . . Man or Nature must succumb; if the one is to live, the other must fall.
>
> — HEGEL

> As long as I am President, what has been divinely given by nature will not be recklessly taken away by man.
>
> — LYNDON B. JOHNSON, Oct. 23, 1965

In 1955, the Metropolitan Museum somewhat unpredictably acquired its first and only Dali. Considered "melodramatic" though admittedly impressive by some critics, the painting depicts, in the precise aberrant detail of the surrealist master, a crucified figure that may represent the innovator, Christ, modern man, or the artist—perhaps all at once. This theme has appeared before; only one feature of Dali's work is truly original. The more familiar shape of the instrument of execution has weirdly expanded into a cruciform "Hypercube." Dali somewhat factiously explained to *Time:* "Gris created beautiful cubism and Picasso continued it. Now myself has created one complete Hypercubist painting." But Dali seems to have accomplished rather more than this—a profound and comprehensive vision, which will be difficult to surpass, of the relationship of the recent psycho-historical evolution to the contemporary order. It is not only the intuitive eyes of art that have discerned therein some intangible negative or cruciferous factor, proportionally (or hypercubistically) at work. Such formally diverse realms of thought as philosophy, psychology, economics, political science, theology, have on occasion produced like intuitions.

Later, I shall indicate some of the parallels. But let us approach the Hypercube through that relatively untraveled byroad of thought known as natural-resource conservationism. Of fairly recent origin and quite obscure position in intellectual history, a decade ago conservationist ideas generated their own "population explosion." In the past two years, these ideas have been pouring at an ever faster rate into the awareness of the general public.

This has been primarily the accomplishment of a number of "middlebrow" independent humanists, scientists, journalists, and government officials. Great credit is due to the Kennedy and Johnson administrations, among whom the *esprit fort* of conservationism seems to have been Interior Secretary Udall. We may be surprised by what, at first sight, appears to be a striking anomaly—that, while all this has been going on, the "highbrow" intellectual circles (grouped about the four or five most influential journals of the English-speaking world) have remained

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largely apathetic, if not hostile. The conservationist movement owes nothing to these circles, whose occasional and belated acceptance of conservationism's advances elsewhere is still obviously of the most nominal or minimal kind.

This is not really the anomaly it seems to be. For it is the intellectuals (whether of left, center, or right, though especially those of the left) who have been the more thoroughly habituated to think and judge in terms of the long dominant socioeconomic progress ideology—for which, in general, all evil cometh of *insufficient* cultural development. But between this attitude and the one that is, as we shall see, at least implicit in conservationism, there exists a radical incompatibility. Its confrontation now lies directly ahead. The event will work a profound transformation upon each party involved.

Before attempting to develop this theme, we must briefly recapitulate the conservationist argument as it now stands.

THIS IS: The expansion of human culture, especially since the Industrial Revolution, has in many direct and indirect ways, including the vastly amplifying factor of increased populations, destroyed or damaged a natural environment—land space, plants, animals, water, and air—which is not inexhaustible. In this respect we must recognize that culture is not a "natural" growth but an unnatural, costly, and even potentially fatal hypertrophy. Sooner or later, domestic and global measures must be taken to reduce and/or finally stabilize at a break-even point the present blindly voracious consumption of natural resources.

The following are among the more disturbing facts and extrapolations that abound in conservationist works. At present and rapidly accelerating rates of consumption, certain of the world's natural resources, hundreds of millions of years in the making, such as petroleum and natural gas, may have vanished forever by the end of the century or shortly afterward. Coal reserves will probably last two or three centuries, perhaps somewhat longer. For fuel, we will then be largely dependent upon artificially generated atomic energy, unless solar energy sources can also be developed.

Other nonrenewable natural resources, such as manganese, tungsten, and copper, will also have been exhausted within a relatively few decades, and many other metals are growing ever more scarce and costly to extract and utilize. In this short time also, the already troublesome water problems, in America and elsewhere, will become acute.

Even were these and other such shortages generated by the distension of modern culture alone, they would still be serious, but the effects are multiplied by the skyrocketing domestic and international populations. Unless we disown our hominid ancestors, our species has existed from between 1 to 2 million years. The human global population climbed slowly to approximately the half-billion mark by 1650; by 1825 it had doubled, by 1925 or so it had redoubled; and now, only 40 years later, it stands at 3 to 4 billion. With present trends, the world's population will reach at least 6 billion by the end of this century. Thus, since 1650, in approximately .00035 to .000175 percent of the human span, there will have come to exist approximately 1,200 percent or 5.5 billion net more people.

The rates of consumption increase and resource depletion have been even faster (double or more the population increase) and, if all these hypertrophies continue, it can be foreseen that our species may eventually strip altogether the relatively thin film of life from the surface of the planet. Even before that, we may have to begin living on cultured algae and mining bare rock, seawater, and sunlight for materials and energy. Beyond that, if population growth still continues, there is an inevitable final end, no matter how ingenious the resorts of science and technology may become. Though for some time, as has been suggested, excess population may be stacked in rising tiers, moved to artificial constructs on or under the oceans, or even (if this should ever become possible), exported to outer space, none of these expedients could in the end keep up with the fantastic potential of unchecked population increase. An eventual halt in the further growth of human popula-

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tion and resource depletion, by whatever means, voluntary or involuntary, is an absolute inevitability—the only question is when.

II

The interpretation of this ominous situation varies appreciably even among professional conservationists. Some are preoccupied with this or that facet to the principled or de facto exclusion of others, or with the general problem. The hedonistic and technical estimates of the point at which it would be desirable, or necessary, to halt and stabilize differ considerably. Among all the conservationist variations, however, it seems that two main divisions exist, although there is some overlapping, which may be designated as the "prudential" and the "psychological."

The prudential conservationist, who is chiefly involved with the objective material or economic side of the matter, has recognized as a real and serious possibility what to most people seems to be only a gratuitous, improbable, and unwelcome speculative hypothesis—that at some time the rates of population growth and resource depletion may outrun the ability of the cultural power to keep on providing some acceptable level of material or physical well-being or, at least, sufficiency.

As concerns the technically possible carrying capacity of the earth, a great deal depends upon future scientific or technological developments and the risky assumption that these can be unfailingly applied despite conceivable political hindrances or natural catastrophes. However, assuming this and usually also the continuation of present consumptive trends, estimates have accordingly ranged from 3 to 30 billion, or even more. It has to be remembered that, allowing for expected population increases, total consumption may have increased five- to six-fold by the year 2,000. We have already reached the level of the most conservative technical estimate, and it is clear that—at least in the modernized areas of the world—there is still a considerable margin of growth. But if present trends continue, by the end of the next century more than 30 billion people will have no additional natural resources to consume—except each other. Conceivably, suggests one authority, the absolute limit might not be reached before the 100- or 200-billion mark. However, man could doubtless subsist on lower consumptive levels and thereby defer for another century or so the point of absolute population saturation. He may conceivably be demented enough to prefer to do this rather than to check his population growth and its inherent factor of resource depletion (which would continue even with lower per capita rates of consumption).

One of the relatively minor but troublesome facets of the Hypercube is the increasing contemporary pollution of land, water, and air. This does direct economic harm and is also becoming increasingly costly to remove or palliate. Hundreds of billions of dollars will have to be spent in the next decades on water and air depollution, and even so this will be only partially effective. To an extent not yet fully determined—possibly much greater than now supposed—this pollution has been eroding human health and is likely to continue doing so.

Yet, to demonstrate that there must eventually be a limit to the business, that as it goes on it will become increasingly complex and costly, and that such side effects as pollution may be alleviated but probably cannot be removed—this is not yet to maintain that the net advantages of modern progress outweigh its disadvantages; nor that we now have, or will have in the West in the present century, an insurmountable overpopulation and/or resource-depletion problem; nor how and in what way we should immediately busy ourselves with the matter.

The prudential conservationist cannot tell you that by the criterion of physical survival or well-being (when applied to the culture as a whole), measures must now be taken to limit populations and the consumption of resources. (Some of the earlier conservationist alarms to this effect were evidently premature.) The prudentialist can tell you only that sooner or later this must be done; advise upon

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interim measures, such as reducing pollutions; warn that there is some objective hazard in assuming that science and technology will unfailingly and indefinitely provide all the necessary powers upon which everything must now be staked. The recent vast power blackouts in the northeast are a strong hint that various mechanical, natural, and especially cultural failures are conceivable that in the increasingly artificial environments might at length bring about true disaster.

These modest prudential cautions have not (until recently) made much of an impression. For the fundamental condition of the modern progress ideology has remained untouched—i.e., that the indefinite expansion of culture is absolutely necessary, possible, and desirable, at least short of what would surely cause actual physical extinction (unless this hazard too may be taken, as is sometimes tacitly suggested). A derivative conviction is that the enterprise does not really involve significant losses; or, if so, that they can and should simply be gotten used to.

Against this egotism or faith in the culture, the prudential conservationists have little further recourse. Sometimes they betray that they wish they could prove to be *objectively* necessary what may be only *subjectively* so, in the name of certain subjective, intangible "values" that the prudentialists themselves may be unable or unwilling to specify and defend.

Here we cross the border into the second general type of conservationism, which is concerned with the *psychological,* subjective nonmaterial, or aesthetic value to humanity of the natural environment. To this sort of conservationist, the increasingly real prospect of a world with finally nothing left in it but cultural artifacts, including humanity itself, seems a nightmare. He believes that sensory contact with the nonhuman or noncultural, with animals, plants, land, sea, air, and ample space stimulates and preserves certain bioemotional or aesthetic experiences desirable or even vitally necessary to man. A good deal of the natural environment, therefore, ought to be preserved against cultural erosion for this reason alone if for no other.

Psychological conservationism takes different forms and degrees. Nature recreation runs the gamut from what may be casual, almost entirely profane, nature visitation or tourism, through the quasi-rationalistic respect (exemplified in some of Hemingway's characters) of the sportsman or hunter for the environment of their calling, to the neoanimistic, near-religious devotion of some types of "bird-watcher" or "nature-lover." Recent efforts to "humanize" urban architecture or the city, that is, make it into a less unnatural environment, may also be considered as one aspect of psychological conservationism. A few individuals develop, like Thoreau, full-blown sophisticated nature philosophies, modern intellectualized, neo-Baalist counterparts of the ancient modes of nature worship that once existed universally, before the great monotheistic repressions.

In all psychological conservationism, however, there is the implicit thesis that all value or freedom cannot be affirmed in terms of acculturated material or physical security, well-being, or gain; and that the former can be lost in the acquisition of the other. Usually, the psychological conservationist is affirming his objection to the contemporary order only in respect to its invidious relationship to the natural environment; he may not be willing to see the issue otherwise defined or further generalized.

That is the fundamental obstacle past which both types of conservationism have been hitherto unable to make much headway. For both, despite some doubts and confusions, most fundamentally accept (whether explicitly or tacitly) the general progress ideology of our time, of which they see their conservationism as but a necessary or desirable modification or reform.

We may have entered the honeymoon period of reformist conservationism. But the difficult truth is that none of the enacted or envisaged reformist measures will be able to keep pace with the galloping destruction of nature by the modern cultural development—they are only temporarily palliating or disguising it. So far, in most of the world, no significant population control programs

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exist, and those that do all together constitute only a small fraction of what is necessary to cope with the magnitude of the problem. The natural environment continues to be eaten up at an accelerating rate. To take an example, and apart from the dubious implication that nature is best communed with through an automobile windshield, the 600 feet of nature on either side of a federal highway granted to us by the "Conservation Congress" is a rather Orwellian substitute for the many thousands of miles that must inevitably be lost by the direct and indirect consequences of the federal building programs. Moreover, even the 600 feet are by no means permanently secure, for they, and both the old and new federal parks and reservations, are all bound to find themselves under the ever greater counterpressures of the more fundamental Hypercubist trends. In 1965, after a decade of urban planning and somewhat influenced by reformist conservationism, "the nation's urban planners were told . . . [that] there is little likelihood [that the cities] will be transformed soon into the Great Society projected by President Johnson." The tone of the Conference of the American Institute of Planners, reported the *New York Times* (Oct. 24, 1965), was one of "harsh and unrelieved self criticism" with no effective remedies in sight.*

III

Meanwhile, by 1978, there has been no fundamental change, although the ecological awareness of the general public has much broadened and deepened, sometimes beyond the ken or control of the established ideological leaderships.

Here and there, efforts to clean up the water and air have been partially successful, but often only temporarily, and previously unknown further pollutions are recurrently detected.

In 1965, when Nelson A. Rockefeller was still pushing the notion that government could do everything, he predicted bathers in the river by 1970. In 1970 he said the Hudson would be pristine by 1975. This year, Charles Samowitz, the city's water commissioner, said there would never again be swimming in the Hudson.[1]

Last year the Environmental Protection Agency announced that it has found all over the country not merely PCBs but several dangerous pesticides in mother's milk.[2] It has not yet been determined whether or not this may mean the separation insofar, perhaps forever, of mother and child.

And there are the inevitable occasional runaway accidents. Among the more sensational have been the breakup of the supertanker *Torrey Canyon* in 1967, and the oil-well blowout off the Santa Barbara coast in 1969. More recently another, and perhaps potentially the largest such spill in history, though this time halted fairly soon, has poured millions of gallons into the North Sea. Future events may include the first nuclear powerplant blowup, and the first terrorist use of nuclear blackmail.

Apart from such untoward but educational events, the major landmarks in the development of the conservationist theme include the wonderful "Earth Day" of 1970, when hopeful multitudes crossed the conventional barriers of ideology, occupation, race, age, and sex. At the beginning of 1972, a group of English scientists issued an ecological "Blueprint for Survival," then compared by some with the *Communist Manifesto*.[3] The following month, the even more widely publicized Club of Rome report was released.[4] Partly under its influence, Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, perhaps the world's greatest living writer, took up the theme (as further described below). Then the American Congress, in an antitechnological growth "first," refused to appropriate funds to develop supersonic transport.

*This article was first published in the Polish-language journal *Kultura* of Paris (December 1964, January-February 1965); a revised, abridged English version appeared in the *Centennial Review* (Summer 1966). From this point onward the article has been considerably updated and revised (only slightly in the preceding pages); in all essentials the general argument remains the same.

[1] Charles Kaiser, in the *New York Times* (hereafter *NYT*), Aug. 1, 1976.
[2] *NYT*, April 30, 1977, p. 22.
[3] *NYT*, January 14, 1972, p. 3.
[4] *NYT*, Feb. 27, 1972, p. 1; also Dennis L. Meadows *et al.*, eds. *The Limits to Growth* (New York: Signet, 1972).

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There have been a number of lively international ecological conferences—a particularly fascinating straw in the wind blew through the fourth international World Wildlife Conference in December 1976 when Jack Mundey, "a former secretary of the Australian Communist party," called for "a new form of socialism, with an ecological heart."[5]And last March, "The Ecological Movement in France has suddenly emerged as a potent political force. An average of 10 percent of the vote. . . ."[6]

Kennedy and Johnson both believed that it was only necessary to bring sufficient energy and intelligence to bear, within the context of the progress ideology—but this, of course, has since proven illusory, in regard to ecological and many other problems. Nor did these problems yield to the ministrations of the considerably more shallow and short-sighted business ideologists, who later dominated the Nixon administration. Within the government itself, this was a period of covert reaction, though lip-service was paid to the growing strength of conservationist opinion elsewhere.

President Carter in effect has revived the earlier Democratic impulses, with the benefit of another decade of experience. And now, for the first time, it has become a matter of official policy to *limit consumption*—though so far in relation to the dwindling energy resources, and only by means of somewhat reduced rather than zero growth. In view of the relatively trivial "sacrifices" entailed, to speak of this as "the moral equivalent of war" is perhaps to expend rhetoric better reserved for something more substantial. However, this was indubitably a tentative step in the right direction.

Meanwhile, within the intellectual demimonde the situation has not fundamentally changed either, though here and there the ecological theme has been broached, notably by Robert Heilbroner in the *New York Review of Books,*[7] and by Edward J. Mishan in *Encounter.*[8] But so far the effect upon Hypercubist intellectuality has been marginal.

The prolonged apathy of the intellectuals toward conservationism really expresses the fact that in the end conservationism cannot be absorbed by any versions of the progress ideology, including those that fancy themselves to be the most "radical" or "revolutionary." And yet, while it undermines modern ideological convictions, reformist conservationism is not equipped to serve as an alternative general social ideology. It cannot deal with the wider and deeper theoretical and social difficulties of whose existence, indeed, many conservationists are even unaware.

This is relatively true even of such highly sophisticated activists as Paul Ehrlich, Barry Commoner, and Garrett Hardin. Ehrlich has been a most effective agitator on the popular level, and has written perhaps the single most authoritative ecological text.[9] Commoner has more recently attempted to join the ecological to the socialist cause, but in this regard is dangerously inexperienced in politcal history and theory.[10]Hardin, the wittiest and most "tough-minded" of the three, tends to overgeneralize from the biological to the cultural (but every socialist should know of his essay "The Tragedy of the Commons," a small masterpiece of reasoning against the laissez-faire principle)![11]

IV

The problem really lies and can only be resolved in the broader and deeper ideological context.

Let us now adopt a "minimum working

[5] *NYT*, Dec. 1, 1976, p. A18.
[6] *NYT*, March 20, 1977, p. 14.
[7] Robert Heilbroner, "The Human Prospect," *New York Review of Books,* January 24, 1974; also his book (New York: Norton, 1975).
[8] Edward J. Mishan, "The Spillover Enemy," *Encounter,* December 1969; "To Grow or Not to Grow?" *Encounter,* May 1973.
[9] Paul Ehrlich, *The Population Bomb* (New York: Ballantine, 1968); *How to Be a Survivor* (New York: Ballantine, 1971); *The End of Affluence* (New York: Ballantine, 1974); and (and with his wife Anne, the main scientific text) *Population, Resources, Environment* (San Francisco: W. H. Freedman, 1970).
[10] Barry Commoner, *Science and Survival* (New York: Viking, 1967); *The Closing Circle* (New York: Knopf, 1971); *The Poverty of Power* (New York: Knopf, 1976).
[11] Garrett Hardin, *Nature and Man's Fate* (New York: Mentor, 1959), *Exploring New Ethics For Survival* (New York: Pelican, 1972), which includes "The Tragedy of the Commons."

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definition" of the idea of socialism—as that of the value and necessity of *long-range, in-depth* planning. This need not at all commit us to any of the Marxist or populist specifics.

It may be, among other things, that the idea of "socialism" can regenerate and reflower in its originally humane and rational import only if it now sinks its roots deeply into the "life sciences"—i.e., the ecological sciences, in relation to *external* natural reality; into the psychological sciences or into the human heart, in relation to *internal* natural reality.

Perhaps we have been fundamentally misled by the dead "materialism" of Marx, from which nothing further can reasonably be expected to grow than more of what already has. The most fundamental level of human causality may be neither "economic" nor "material," nor yet sociological, political, or military, but *psychological.* In this "base" there take place the conflicts and events of which all else in culture, including its relation to the natural environment, are the "superstructural" expressions.

This reinterpretation inevitably demands another consideration of the legacy of Freud: Freud's insight that the central conflict within human nature is one between culture and internal natural reality, which is of incalculable value. That is, to explicate Freud's theme a little, without the repression of certain aspects of natural biopsychological functioning and its direct mode of consciousness, the symbols or abstractions that constitute cultural reality cannot arise in the mind.

Moreover, Freud believed that this negative relationship between natural and cultural reality was of a cumulative character. This was his "Iron Law." At a 1909 meeting of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society, Freud rejected Adler's Marxist utopianism as follows:

> . . . progress can be described as a repression that progresses over the centuries. Our culture consists in this: that more and more of our instincts become subject to repression, for which there are beautiful illustrations, particularly in poetic productions (see Rank . . .).[12]

[12] In Herman Nunberg and Ernst Federn, eds. *Minutes of the Vienna Psychoanalytic Society* (New York: International Universities Press, 1967), vol. 11, p. 174.

It cannot be overemphasized, however, that accepting so much of Freud does not entail accepting any of his biological, sexual, infantile, intrafamilial, Oedipal *specifics*—at least as far as matters of general cultural interpretation are concerned.

There is another important factor in human psychology, not well understood by Freud, but later brought out by his at one time closest associate and intended successor Otto Rank. This is the puzzlingly "irrational" belief that in the Western tradition usually goes by the name of the "soul" or "God." This Rank conceptualized as our *inherent* natural-psychological belief in omnipotence and immortality (often projected outward on various avatars). Though objectively irrational and illusory, it is, subjectively, psychologically a reality, truth, and value, for which, and for both personal and social ends, men and women have often sacrificed many real things, sometimes including life itself.

The point for our time, as Rank had recognized, is that because this belief is psychologically natural and inherent, it has not at all disappeared with religion but has persisted and determined much in modern thought and behavior that is mistakenly assumed to be "rational," including much in socialist theory and history.

Marx never understood this psychological factor theoretically; in fact, he unwittingly expressed it himself in various ways (but this is another story). In consequence, the socialist movement has been unable to protect itself against the reappearance in the 20th century, under seemingly "rational" auspices, of powerful irrationalities (including the sacrificial holocausts of Russia, Germany, and China).

But, with the help of Freud and Rank, it may be that human self-comprehension and self-restraint can be elevated to that point at which such things will never happen again.[13]

[13] Jack Jones, "Art Between Magic and Revolution," *Psychoanalytic Review,* Fall 1976; "Five Versions of Psychological Man," *Salmagundi,* Summer-Fall 1972. See also my contribution on Rank to the *International Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Crowell, Collier & Macmillan, 1968), and "Does God Exist?" *Human Context* (London), Autumn 1975.

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V

With these more general ideas we now come back to the ecological cause. Its unexpected entry into ideological history may turn out to have been the turning point. Conceivably, a new kind of alliance is in the making—one between the post-Marxist and post-Freudian thinkers, and those who represent the now more and more visibly "vampirized" aspects of external natural reality. To paraphrase one of Marx's epigrams, perhaps only in ecology can the larger philosophic opposition to the hypertrophic trends of culture find its "material weapon," its effective practical arguments and justification. On the other hand, it may also be that the prudential conservationists, the bird watchers and their birds, must all alike perish if they fail to find their general philosophy.

The conservationists have drawn up their battle line across a single province of the general contradiction between culture and nature, of whose vast dominions through cultural time and space they have still but comparatively little idea. This "Iron Law" rules over human culture in respect to *both* internal and external nature. The possibility now emerges of a unitary interpretation of their joint decline throughout the history of culture.

Only thereby, it seems, can the objectives of reformist conservationism be finally secured. For, as we have seen, the prudential conservationist usually cannot prove the *present* necessity of drastic conservationist measures, which can be justified only in terms of intangible "values." The psychological conservationist, on the other hand, is able to interpret and defend these values only in relation to *external* nature—a ground much too narrow and inadequate, theoretically.

But the expansion of the battle by "*depth*-conservationism" means that the cause no longer depends upon our being finally driven to the wall of objective technical necessity, nor upon moot estimates of the psychological value to humanity or its relation to the natural environment alone. Immediate conservationist measures are justified primarily by their deeper, more general and profoundly humane or libertarian implications:

(1) Any check upon industrialization or the consumption of natural resources would thereby immediately reduce by so much the absolute growth of culture *and* repression.

(2) Any reduction in the rate of population increase would likewise decrease by so much the absolute mass or quantity of man-borne culture *and repression.* (Thus the significance of human population growth is not primarily biological; it is in a sense even antibiological.) Natural-resource conservationism is only one aspect of an emergent general opposition to the overweening exploitation of nature for the sake of cultural "surplus value"—whether as "Capital" or the "Revolution."

In the past decade or so, we may have been converging, from the conservationist and many other directions, on the essential post-Marxist theme—that, as culture expands in mass and intensity, whether at a normal or revolutionary pace, it inevitably draws further away from internal and external nature, whose formerly viable qualities are more and more slipping away. This is "the notorious crime of society as a whole" in our time, and this dilemma cannot be identified with and blamed upon any particular race, nation, or class—and any spurious revolutionary purgation, as by the Marxist class-war ideology, can only worsen the already quite adequate speed of folly.

"Gradually it was disclosed to me," Solzhenitsyn has written, "that the line separating good and evil passes not through states nor between classes, but right through every human heart—and through all human hearts."[14] In his famous 1968 program, Sakharov also had warned against ideological absolutism: "The division of mankind threatens it with destruction. . . . Any action increasing the division of mankind, any preaching of the incompatibility of world ideologies and nations, is madness and a crime."[15]

It seems that man must now embark upon a

[14] Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *The Gulag Archipelago,* vol. II (New York: Harper & Row, 1975), p. 615.
[15] In *Sakharov Speaks* (New York: Knopf, 1974), p. 58.

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new sort of ideological and political struggle. This struggle may give a deeper meaning and new impetus to both the now generally, if conventionally, accepted objectives of reformist conservationism, and to the political conservation of half the world against further totalitarian erosion. All this might eventually flourish by the name of "depth-conservationism," "depth-socialism," "multidimensional socialism," or perhaps even "scientific socialism" (if only because perhaps the irrational factor in human nature finally will have been rightly understood and mastered).[16]

This would also subsume the otherwise too often shallow and insipid idea of moderation, and all that in the history of thought and sensibility we call profound. For insight in one way or another into the existence of the Iron Law, or into the existence of forgotten, lost or repressed contents below normal or profane cultural egotism seems to be, in the final analysis, just what we mean by the profound.

It is indeed profoundly true that "Man or Nature must succumb; if one is to live, the other must fall." But perhaps *only so far*. In this conception there may be hope of gaining control over the cultural chaos of today.

This linkage between the ecological and the antitotalitarian cause has been affirmed by Solzhenitsyn, in this respect more profound than Sakharov or Medvedev. The whole idea, he says, of

> *endless, infinite* progress has turned out to be an insane, ill-considered dash into a blind alley . . . . the solution to both [the ecological and the totalitarian] problems are identical in many respects. . .one and the same turnabout, a *single* decision, would deliver us from *both* dangers. Such a happy coincidence is rare. Let us value history's gift and not miss these opportunities.[17]

(Some other ideas of Solzhenitsyn need to be more critically reviewed, but this essay is not the place.[18])

VI

In the long run, there is not much point in trying to arrest only such secondary aspects of the problem as water and air pollution. It is the deeper trends and their correlations that must be faced. Overindustrialization, overpopulation, overconsumption, overorganization, overurbanization, overeducation, etc. are the main aspects of the basic picture.

It is still only partially realized that most of the cultural hypertrophies are interdependent. That is, you cannot limit industrialization or consumption without also limiting populations (if the standard of living is not to fall); you cannot (the anarchists and some conservatives to the contrary) limit modern political overorganization or the "bureaucracy," without also limiting industrialization, and so forth.

Some comprehensive plan must be developed for the orderly retardation and eventual stabilization of all the major hypertrophies. This would mean the conservation of at least what primary freedoms and external natural resources we now have—by not adding unnecessarily to (and perhaps abandoning some of) the burden of culture; and by redistributing energies and resources within the present level of culture and repression. Perhaps some ground can even be recovered here and there from the Iron Law in both the external and the internal senses. This would not mean only a negative stoppage or limitation of human effort, for it could be selectively redirected into ways not further or at least less destructive of nature and of the whole cultural enterprise. There would still be all the creative potentialities within the new context.

But at what stage would it be desirable and possible to fix the point of balance between nature and culture? Probably not much

[16] A theme I pursued in my essay "The Idea of Socialism: the Ninety-Degree Turn?" *Abraxas*, Spring 1971; also in "Who Thinks Left? Who Thinks Right? Who *Thinks* Radically?" *Human Context*, Autumn 1972.

[17] Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, *Letter to the Soviet Leaders* (New York: Harper & Row, 1974), pp. 21, 19 f.

[18] See my essay-review of his edition of *From Under the Rubble* in the *International Philosophical Quarterly*, Spring 1977.

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behind or ahead of that stage already reached by Western culture generally. It is arguable that, in America at least, perhaps also elsewhere in the West, the average "standard of living" may well be already *too high* in terms of many considerations: (1) the imminent necessity of domestic and global prudential conservationism; (2) the immediate desirability of psychological natural-resource conservationism; (3) domestic and especially international ethical and political considerations, for it becomes both inexpedient and impossible to ignore the gross and increasing differentials between pervasive luxury and waste on one end of the economic scale, and genuine distress on the other; (4) above all, because of the Iron Law of all cultural increase, which in certain respects leads us subjectively and objectively toward increasingly unnatural ways of living, and ideologically toward totalitarianism and further holocausts.

America is now in an excellent practical position to make the great discovery that enough is enough, and to set an example to the world in making not eternal "war-against-" but a final and durable "peace-with-poverty." That fresh and unforeseen difficulties would likely arise from these new lines of policy is undeniable. What we have been striving to establish here is only the abstract desirability and possibility of such a stabilization of cultural development. This principle would give us, in theory, the power to choose where we would stand—whereas now we are swept along, willy-nilly, in our daily adaptation to the seemingly irresistable and omnipotent demands of "the system." The restoration of this power of choice to man is far more radical a suggestion than any reform or revolution that has or can be proposed within the conventional progress-adaptive ideology (whether of left, center, or right).

The greatest handicap of the West in its protracted struggle with totalitarianism has always been ideological and theoretical—not economic, military, or political. Its primary weaknesses, however, have tended to slowly erode its other strengths, as has been particularly evident in the past decade (1967-77). Hyperrationalist Marxism, though delusional, is profoundly so; whereas the Western primary-rational ideology is in its profane phase more realistic, and permits of an objectively greater degree of political, economic, and internal freedom, but it is superficial. It may be that, through some version of depth-conservationism, the Western strong points can be infused with a new theoretical and ideological profundity.

Of course, the global situation cannot be stabilized unilaterally, and meanwhile the West has to meet all competitive exigencies, which will often compel the further development of its own cultural powers. But even through these forced detours and mazes of immediate policy, the goal of an eventual stabilization of the relation between nature and culture might be pursued. The international theoretical and ideological struggle for it in some important respects has already begun.

What is to be hoped for is some general *ideological* peaceful "convergence" in which, on one side, the Marxist criticism of "capitalism" and, on the other, the often too superficial Western criticism of "totalitarianism" would be transformed into the joint criticism of hypertrophic cultural evolution itself. This would be a genuine "historical compromise."

As a new kind of dialogue emerges, the older misleading and sterile socioeconomic conventions, founded upon and limited by the pre-Freudian illusion of the identity of more cultural power and more "freedom," no doubt will be eventually left behind, while interest shifts to the hard realities, the difficulties, and the new possibilities that can emerge only from a fundamentally post-Marxist comprehension. □

To Our Contributors

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James Wright and
Richard Hamilton

Blue Collars, Cap & Gown

A new "crisis" in capitalist social organization has begun to command the attention of scholars and commentators—the much-discussed problem of "overeducation" in America—a problem that one necessarily approaches with some caution. For decades now, liberal intellectuals have looked to education as the universal solution to social ills: more education would break the vicious cycle of poverty, elevate the masses from their state of ignorance, sharpen their talents, provide equal opportunity for all. Measured against the full spectrum of human needs, "overeducation" is certainly a contradiction in terms, suggesting, wrongly, that people can somehow learn more or know more than they need to.

Still, there is now ample evidence that the United States has "democratized" access to education to the point where the institutions of higher learning are producing far more people trained for upper-level professional, technical, and managerial careers than the economy can readily absorb.[1] The well-known Task Force Report *Work in America* estimates that in the next decade there will be 2.5 college graduates competing for every job requiring a college degree and that the market value of a degree will plummet. "Without major changes in the quantity and quality of work, one consequence of this oversupply of graduates will be a large class of underemployed college graduates, disillusioned with work and resentful of the poor returns on their investment in collegiate education."[2]

How far we have come in the last decade! A mere ten years ago, it was possible to write in a learned scholarly journal that "it is becoming apparent that all large-scale industrial societies are failing to produce the full range of highly qualified manpower that is necessary for them to maintain themselves and to develop further their industrial potential and economic growth."[3] Today, of course, the more apparent problem is what to do with the surplus of "highly qualified manpower" that has been created.

Most recent discussions of overeducation have focused on what we regard as the less serious half of the problem, that is, on the situation of college *graduates*.[4] Yet nearly 90 percent of the graduates enter their working careers somewhere in the white-collar ranks. In many cases, to be sure, these early jobs are relatively menial and unchallenging and thus

[1]Cf. Richard Freeman, *The Over-Educated American* (New York: Academic Press, 1976).

[2]James O'Toole *et al.*, *Work in America* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1973), p. 136.

[3]John Porter, "The Future of Upward Mobility," *American Sociological Review*, February 1968, pp. 5-19.

[4]E.g., Paul Blumberg and James Murtha, "College Graduates & the American Dream," *Dissent*, Winter 1977; Freeman, *op. cit.*; James O'Toole, "The Reserve Army of The Union-Employed," *Change*, May-June 1975. etc.

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represent some degree of underemployment in the sense that the people involved are capable of more demanding work. It can also be acknowledged that this period of underemployment may well be a period of discontent or dismay. Still, even if these early jobs are not all that one might hope, they are at least white-collar jobs that offer some chance for later improvement; and in this respect, any discontent they engender would probably be short-lived.

Roughly half the persons who enroll in colleges, however, fail to attain a degree, and, in contrast to the pattern for graduates, about 40 percent of the dropouts end up in blue-collar or manual occupations, where chances for upward movement, especially into the middle class, are relatively slim.[5] Even those most taken with "technological upgrading" would not seriously maintain that one or two years of college training is either necessary or helpful to the performance of blue-collar work. Indeed, the opposite argument is far more common: that among blue-collar workers increasing education is associated with frustration and discontent.[6] Yet, more and more, young people with only a few years of college find that routes into white-collar employment are closed and turn to blue-collar work. The result—a college-educated segment within the traditional blue-collar working class—is surely "overeducation" in its purest and most visible form. It is also a phenomenon virtually unique to American society in the last half of the 20th century.

The numbers involved are by no means trivial. Approximately one-fifth of all white male manual workers in the U.S. have spent one or more years in institutions of higher learning. Of this 20 percent, the overwhelming majority (about 85 percent) do not have a college degree. Their extra years of education, in short, produce nothing in the way of a credential that might be traded in the job market for more prestigious or rewarding work. These "extra years" of education, for the most part, were not received at better-known colleges and universities. Two-fifths of the college-educated workers have attended a two-year junior or community college (although fewer than 5 percent have a degree from such institutions, suggesting that even here we are dealing primarily with a dropout population). The remaining three-fifths are concentrated heavily in lesser-known state colleges and universities: Arkansas State, Newark State, Tennessee Tech, and so on—not Harvard, Berkeley, or Wisconsin. The college-educated working class, it might be said, is educated at the periphery, not at the center, of the American educational system.

Trend data give some indication of just how recent this phenomenon is. Twenty-five years ago, the proportion of blue-collar workers with some college education stood at about 4 percent; since then, the proportion has increased five-fold. One implication is that the college-educated working class is disproportionately young: more than half of them are under 30, making them by far the youngest sector of the manual class. Their relative youth, of course, only reinforces an expectation of their discontent and frustration and, ultimately, of insurgency directed against the system that is responsible for their fate.

As might be expected, college-educated manual workers tend to come from working-class (and farm) backgrounds, not from the middle class. Thus, theirs is not "downward mobility" but blocked mobility. For the most part, they are the children of blue-collar workers who, despite obvious efforts, never "made it" into the middle class.

The few findings reported so far are

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[5]The preceeding and all subsequent figures are taken from our paper, "College Educated Blue-Collar Workers," read at the American Sociological Association meetings (New York, August 1976), and from our subsequent research.

[6]Thus: "the more educated the blue-collar worker, the more likely he is to be dissatisfied with his work, and the more he will want to make some of the decisions connected with his job." From William and Margaret Westley, *The Emerging Worker* (Montreal: McGill U. Press, 1971), p. 118. Or: "If the blue-collar worker is not challenged, his rising education may lead to work dissatisfaction." From Sar Levitan and Robert Taggart, "The Blue Collar Worker Weathers the Ordeal of Change," in Levitan, ed., *Blue-Collar Workers* (New York: McGraw Hill, 1971), p. 378. Such examples may be multiplied almost indefinitely.

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sufficient to impart a sense of the origins of the college-educated working class. Many of them were born in the "baby boom" of the postwar years, the children of returning veterans who themselves "returned" to factory work. Their background thus fits into a cherished American image: the hard-working blue-collar father, scraping and sacrificing so his kids can have it better than he did. A college education, so it is said, is the ticket to the "good life," to the gracious suburbs, the stable and comfortable white-collar jobs. Those who miss the message at home will certainly receive it through the schools or the media. "To get a good job," it is said, "get a good education."

For many families, of course, the sacrifices pay off: the children study hard, receive good grades, are sent to quality institutions and enjoy some success there, then end up pursuing successful and rewarding white-collar careers. But for many others, the reality is quite different. Often, the distant quality institution is out of the question: grades or family resources are such as to send them to nearby, more affordable, but often less prestigious schools. The children, in turn, spend one or two years in these places, then leave for one or another reason. Once out, they find that their incomplete education has not prepared them to compete for middle-class jobs. The alternative is factory work or unemployment. So they take up the manual work of their fathers, victims of the "false promises" that society has made. How bitter the experience seems! "Here," Blumberg and Murtha say, "is the major point of crisis and pain—to invest years in school, with high hopes for a career afterward, leading, finally, to nothing."

But is the resulting tension and frustration, as those authors say, indeed "the most potentially explosive force for radicalizing educated labor"? Will their presumed discontent and rebelliousness make college-educated workers a vanguard of the working class in the near future? While this sounds plausible enough as a hypothesis, most of the available accounts contain nothing in the way of evidence beyond the occasional striking anecdote. We need a systematic, empirical review of the outlooks of the college-educated working class.

The following conclusions depend on the responses of college-educated manual workers to questions put to them in recent national surveys. (Because of the trends, representatives of this group now appear in sufficient numbers to allow for detailed analysis.) These surveys, while by no means adequate to answer all questions about the college-educated working class, now do elevate discussion past mere speculation.

For obvious reasons, we have concentrated our efforts on the question of work and the reaction of college-educated manual workers to it. The job, one presumes, is the most immediate and visible symbol of "dashed aspirations," and thus the logical target for discontent. Yet, despite the apparent plausibility of this assumption, there is precious little evidence that would support it. By far the best source of data on the question is the Quality of Employment Survey conducted in the winter of 1972-73 at the University of Michigan—by any standard, the largest, most detailed survey on attitudes about work ever undertaken. One question in that survey simply asked, "all in all, how satisfied would you say you are with your job?" The proportions of blue-collar workers who said they were "very" satisfied varied from 47 percent of those with less than a high-school education to 46 percent of those with some college training—in sum, no difference. Adding the two positive responses together ("very" and "somewhat" satisfied), the proportions were 91 percent and 88 percent respectively, again no difference. Surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center show a very similar pattern: in their combined 1972, 1973, and 1974 surveys, the proportion of college-trained manuals who were "very" or "moderately" satisfied with their work ran to 78 percent (vs. 84 percent of the segment with high-school education or less). For all the talk about frustration and pain associated with greater education in the

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working class, overall levels of satisfaction appear to be high and the differences across educational groups prove to be remarkably insubstantial.

To be sure, the one-shot cross-sectional survey says nothing about trends, about whether workers are "becoming" more or less satisfied, etc. Quinn and his associates, however, have reviewed the major national surveys of the topic conducted over the past 15 years and, contrary to the recent wave of claims, they report that "there has not been any significant decrease in overall levels of job satisfaction."[7] The much-discussed contrary hypothesis, that worker alienation is on the rise, possesses no substantial base in evidence.

The standard "job satisfaction" question has been the object of much derision, especially as its "meaning" seems so elusive and ambiguous (particularly to advanced intellectuals who comment on job-satisfaction questions). While we do not share this view—and least of all do we presume to know more of how people "really" feel about their work than what they tell us they feel—we have also examined a wide variety of more specific questions relating to the sensed quality of one's job, and nearly all of them result in essentially the same picture.

One question asks what respondents would advise for "a good friend of yours" who indicated an interest in "working in a job like yours for your employer." The proportion of manual workers who would "strongly recommend" the job under these circumstances varied from 62 percent of the high-school dropouts to 61 percent of the college-educated—again a trivial difference. A related question reads, "Knowing what you now know, if you had to decide all over again whether to take the job you now have, what would you decide?" Slightly more than three-quarters of the college-educated manual workers said they would "take it"—a substantially higher proportion than registered by either high-school dropouts or those with just a high-school degree. (The latter proportions hovered around 60 percent.)

These and a large array of very similar findings have led us to two conclusions: (1) In absolute terms, manual workers are generally much more positive about the work they do than is commonly supposed. And (2), education is practically useless as a predictor of job discontent in the working class. That college-educated manual workers "should" somehow feel more hostility toward their jobs seems to have escaped their own attention entirely.

There was one important exception to the patterns just described, this on a question asking, "If you were free to go into any type of job you wanted, what would your choice be?" The proportion saying, "something else," regularly increased with education, from 46 percent of the least educated to 62 percent of the most. Thus, whereas on all other questions clear, and often sizable, majorities of the college-educated manual workers appear to be satisfied with their jobs, now we find that three-fifths of them would nonetheless prefer to be doing something else.

Have we at long last found a question that truly reveals the extent of dissatisfaction with work? While a possibility, the answer is somewhat more subtle. Workers who expected that they would soon be moving into a different line of work, we assume, would be more likely to give the "disaffected" answer to this question—not because they were dissatisfied with their current work but because they were aspirants or, less charitably, mobility-conscious.

It was possible to check this hypothesis on a number of more direct measures of mobility expectations, and in all cases the college-educated manuals did prove to have the highest expectations for the future. About 40 percent of them, for example, expected to be in a different job "five years from now," compared with about 20 percent who expected this among manual workers with a high-school education or less. Similarly, about two-fifths of the college-educated manual workers expected to be promoted at their

[7]Robert Quinn, Graham Staines, and Margaret McCullough, *Job Satisfaction: Is There a Trend?* (Washington, DC: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1974), p. 1.

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current place of work within a year; for the high-school dropouts, the proportion was about 20 percent. Finally, the college group was also much more likely to be actively seeking different work than were other blue-collar workers. Thus, it appears, college-educated manual workers are satisfied with their jobs in part because they expect that they will soon be moving out of them into different, better lines of work. They clearly do not feel that they are "locked in" to "dead-end" jobs.

Whether these expectations for a better future are realistic or not cannot be decided with the evidence in hand. Much obviously depends on the future health of the economy and on an array of intangible factors. One thing is certain: if the college-educated manual workers believe that their situation is soon destined to improve, then the chances for insurgency directed at their current situation are correspondingly diminished. However "frustrated" and "disappointed" they are with the present (and we think the evidence is that they are much less frustrated and disappointed than most commentators have argued), they are nonetheless optimistic about the future; their outlooks are characterized more by accommodation than discontent. Thus, the current stint at manual work represents at worst a postponement of their ultimate aspirations, not a conscious abandoning of them. In the phrase of Bowles and Gintis, they seem to have retained their faith in "private solutions," and so long as this remains true, the appeal of "political solutions" can only be modest.[8]

What has been said about the attitudes of college-educated blue-collar workers toward their work is equally true of their satisfactions with all other domains of their experience, so far as we have been able to measure them. Their stated satisfactions with incomes and financial situations, with their marriages and family life, with life in general, and their overall state of "happiness" were in all cases indistinguishable from the rest of the working class.

In sum, the idea that the best-educated blue-collar workers would be more dissatisfied, alienated, or disenchanted does not receive serious support in any context, least of all in the context of work. Therefore, the increasingly common argument, that they are now or soon will be a "left vanguard" for the rest of the working class also seems far-fetched. □

[8]Samuel Bowles and Herbert Gintis, *Schooling in Capitalist America* (New York: Basic Books, 1976), p. 222.

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Shlomo Avineri

A Meeting with Saul Bellow

In Saul Bellow's latest book *To Jerusalem and Back* [Viking Press, 1976], I found on p. 43 the following account:

> Eban's attitude toward Russia is shared by many. In a different form, I heard it recently at the Beth Belgia, one of the Hebrew University buildings, from Professor Shlomo Avineri, who is a historian and political scientist. As stated by Professor Avineri, the position is something like this: After World War II, it was widely believed that capitalism had taken a new lease on life. But this was an illusion. The postwar prosperity of capitalism was based on cheap energy and low-price raw materials from backward countries. The price of these has now risen, and the last free ride of Western capitalism is over—over for all except, perhaps, America. Other Western countries must now prepare to live on a more austere standard. In Eastern Europe, on the other hand, life has immensely improved. The lower classes are beginning to eat well and dress comfortably and live in warm apartments. It is principally the old middle class that is unhappy—the professionals, the intellectuals. And across the face of Europe we see a gradual evening out of privileges and a redistribution of the good things of life. The Western centers of old Europe are growing dimmer, but Hungary, Bulgaria, Rumania, Poland are brightening up. This, rather than expanding Red imperialism and the subjugation of Europe by Russia, is what we should be considering. If I understand him, Professor Avineri is saying that an independent sort of communism is developing among Russia's satellites and that Western communism is becoming more democratic, less obedient to Moscow. In any case, the world is being transformed, and neither superpower is what so many of us had always assumed it to be.
>
> This is the sort of thing one hears in Paris or Milan rather than Jerusalem. Such a vision of the future evidently grows out of assumptions about the decline of American prestige and influence. It takes for granted that in fighting the extension of communism in Southeast Asia the United States made the greatest mistake in its history. A desire to accept a new view of communism is one of the results of the Vietnam disaster and of America's internal disorder. Besides, Israel's utter dependency upon the United States leads Israeli intellectuals to hunt for signs of hope in the Communist world. I often wonder why it should rend people's hearts to give up their Marxism. What does it take to extinguish the hopes raised by the October Revolution? How much more do intellectuals need to learn about the U.S.S.R.? Knowing something about life in Communist countries, I disagree completely with Avineri. In my judgment this is a frivolous analysis —heartless, too, if you think how little personal liberty there is in Eastern Europe. One has no business to give away the rights of others. But I look again at Professor Avineri and see that he is an engaging fellow, far from heartless. I conclude that he is only trying out these views. Tomorrow, in another mood, he may take a different line.

Such a meeting between us did indeed take place. At the time I was told by my friend and colleague Professor Joseph Ben-David, who teaches sociology at the Hebrew University, that Saul Bellow was in Jerusalem. The author and his wife, the daughter of a former leader of the Rumanian Communist party, were staying at Mishkenot Sha'ananim, the beautiful hostel for artists and writers run by the Jerusalem municipality. Ben-David told me that Bellow would appreciate it if the two of us could meet, since he would like to hear my views on various political issues.

None of us knew then that Bellow was working on a book about Israel, based almost entirely on his discussions with Jerusalemites. I certainly had no idea that whoever met with him would be appearing in the next book of a man to be awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. So many foreign guests are interested in meeting with Israelis, and it

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was with this in mind that I set forth for my meeting with Saul Bellow.

Our meeting took place at the Beth Belgia Faculty Club of the Hebrew University, to which I invited Bellow for lunch on November 10, 1975. At that time, I was still Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences at the Hebrew University, and it was only about six months later that I assumed my position with the Foreign Ministry in the Rabin government.

ACCORDING to my notes, the meeting went on as follows:

After we had exchanged introductions and pleasantries, Bellow asked me if I wasn't apprehensive about the aggressive intentions of the Soviet Union in the Middle East. I replied that Soviet policy vis-à-vis the Middle East to date has been consistent with traditional Russian imperialist aims in this region since the days of the Czars. Basically, the Soviet presence in the area is designed to undermine the stability of the regional political system. One should, therefore, also view the agreements signed by Israel with Egypt and Syria after the Yom Kippur war in this context. Even if the agreements by themselves are not yet a final peace agreement, they nonetheless contribute to regional stability, not only by reducing danger of war between us and the Arab states, but also because their effect is to reduce Soviet influence in the Middle East and to increase the American standing in the area. Any new agreement that may be reached in this region will also have to be based on the continued exclusion of Russia from the area, coupled with a further increase of American influence, which will serve to consolidate the stability and political balance of the Middle East system.

Bellow persisted: did I not fear the aggressive designs of the Soviet Union against Israel, which could frustrate all peace efforts and undermine any agreement that may be reached in the future? I replied that our central probelm was not the Soviet Union: though it reinforces Arab hostility, it is not the source of the conflict. It is not the Soviet Union that prevented the attainment of peace in the area—but the stubborn position of the Arab countries, which refused to recognize the right of Israel to exist as a sovereign Jewish state.

Here Bellow interrupted me to ask whether I did not think that the Soviet Union was likely to take over the entire world in the near future, if America continued with her policy of appeasement, known as détente?

It was here that I realized that we were not on the same wavelength; the more Bellow expounded his own views regarding the American government, Kissinger's policies, the withdrawal from Vietnam and everything involved in it, the more I understood that our conversation would not focus on the problems of the Middle East. I had innocently assumed that Bellow was interested in hearing the opinion of an Israeli, such as myself, about the problems of the conflict in our area and its possible solution. It now became clear that the conversation was moving in the direction of a general debate about the global aspects of American policy.

As Bellow continued to elaborate his ideas on the moral decline of America and its diminishing international status, I felt that I was becoming increasingly intrigued by the situation in which I found myself: before me sat one of the most brilliant authors of the Western world, whose books I value, since I always found them a source of much intellectual and aesthetic pleasure. I have always admired Bellow's unique qualities of psychological and human sensitivity, his successful raising of the distress of the American intellectual—usually Jewish—to a level of universal significance, by virtue of his subtle emotional understanding and perception. But never was I able to conclude from Bellow's writings that he was truly or deeply acquainted with the political world in any comprehensive way. And there I found myself, instead of luxuriating in Mr. Bellow's literary genius, having to discuss the global aspects of American politics with him. Discussion of our own problems? Every Israeli is used to that. But to discuss global politics with Saul Bellow? What frustration!

I expressed the opinion that after World War II, two common fallacies had been prevalent among Western intellectuals regarding developments in international relations, both of which had been apparent as early as 1945, but later came to be seen as universal and almost eternal laws of historical development. The actual historical span of these developments was very short and I suggested to Bellow that, if he had no objections, I would elaborate on this point, since only in this way would I be able to refute the theses he had expounded concerning the collapse of the West. He asked me to continue.

I explained that one fallacy was related to the character of the development of Western liberalism. After World War II, it became clear that Western capitalism and democracy had succeeded in overcoming two challenges at the same time—

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the challenge of Fascism and that of Communism. During the 1930s few had believed that democratic, liberal, capitalist Europe would survive. The general feeling was—in view of the economic crisis, mass unemployment, and the rise of European Fascist and Communist parties—that the days of the liberal West were numbered, and that it was destined to collapse in the face of Fascism and Communism.

The terminaiton of World War II, the defeat of Fascism and the prevention of the rise of Communism in Western Europe, as well as the emergence of the neoliberal welfare state, upset these predictions. If, prior to 1939, there had been almost total agreement regarding the imminent collapse of Western liberalism, the new balance struck in post-1945 Western Europe seemed to have the quality of eternity: Fascism had been routed, the spread of Communism had been arrested, and the welfare state would exist forever. *Encounter* and *Commentary* were the epitome of this expression of Western neoliberalism's feeling of confidence and relief. It was not by coincidence that most of the outstanding contributors to these two journals were thinkers and writers who had themselves been sympathetic to Communism in the 1930s; the very fact of their outgrowing the Communism of their youth was an indication of the basic direction in which the winds of Western liberalism were blowing.

However, I noted, this euphoria—much as it expressed the achievements of the post-1945 era—was short-termed and uncritical. It ignored the fact that, among the major factors affecting the emergence of the new post-1945 balance in Europe, cheap energy was of critical importance. The rise in standards of living, the relative affluence, the liberation of the Western working class from the oppression and misery that had in the past pushed it to extremes, the prevention of economic crises by means of policies based on Keynesian theory, full employment and social welfare—all these were made possible because of the low cost of oil. Europe succeeded in achieving hitherto unimagined comfort and prosperity, in contrast to the dire predictions of both Marxist and liberal economists, because the price of industry's basic raw material—oil—was determined not by the capitalist economy's law of supply and demand, but by the *political* power of the West, which still controlled, directly and indirectly, the energy source on whose cheapness the entire Western economy depended.

The oil crisis of 1973 was a dramatic expression of the end of this honeymoon period. It had already been clear years earlier that with the termination of European control over the oil-producing countries, local rulers would sooner or later rebel against the hegemony of the Western oil companies and would seek to employ to their own advantage the resources found beneath the sands of their countries, which are of such vital importance to the West. There is also no doubt that, because of the cheap energy resources available in the past, Western economies neglected the search for alternative energy sources, for it seemed wasteful to invest in such research and development when oil was so cheap.

At the same time, it became clear that inflation was a necessary by-product of the consistent growth in Western affluence, and this would inevitably lead to new types of economic crises—to pressures for higher wages, strikes, a decline in investment and international trade, economic stagnation, and even the threat of collapse of entire national economies (in Italy and Great Britain, for example), which could not continue to support high living standards at a time of skyrocketing oil prices. The crisis came to a head in 1973, and though it was regrettable, it was but an expression of other, deeper processes, which are significant in their revelation of the fact that the balance created after 1945 was far more vulnerable and ephemeral than had been thought at first.

Was I, then, of the opinion that the Communists would take over Western Europe, Bellow asked.

No, I did not think so. But it was obvious that the post-1945 welfare state was not the ultimate salvation and, like every historical process, it must undergo changes. Some of its affluence was achieved by virtue of the cheap energy available to it, and now Western Europe will have to adjust to the new reality (America, I noted, was relatively immune to these developments because of its own oil resources). As a result, we can expect certain economic and political dislocations in Western European countries. Europe's courting of the Arab countries is also part of this new structural reality, and is likely to constitute a threat to the democratic character of certain European states, to the degree that they find themselves overly dependent in one way or another on the oil-producing countries.

Parallel to this the process, now apparent within the French and Italian Communist parties, of a gradual emancipation from Soviet dogmatism and from dependence on the Soviet Union will radically effect the Western political power system. One may, of course, disapprove of the rise of Com-

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munist parties and the possibility of their being included in government coalitions but, from the democratic point of view, it is clear that an Italian Communist party participating in a parliamentary coalition and declaring its approval of parliamentarism is quite different from the Czechoslovak Communist party being forced on that country by the Soviets at gunpoint in 1948. One might, perhaps, find both phenomena disturbing, but the two differ in both the political and the historical perspectives. The way to prevent the rise of Communism in Western Europe is to reduce public support for the Communist parties in France and Italy, and nobody has come up with a proven method of doing so as yet.

AT THIS POINT, I told Bellow, I wished to turn to what seemed to me to be the second fallacy in assessing the post-1945 situation, and this relates to developments in Eastern Europe.

According to this revisionist school of thought, the take-over did not result from a strategy of world revolution (which in the long run doesn't interest the tough Kremlin leadership), but from the strategic and imperial interests of the Soviet Union as a superpower. After World War II, Russia wanted to surround itself with satellite states within a strategic security belt. The most effective way to achieve this was to station Soviet forces within their borders, along with the promise of "friendly" (i.e., Communist) rule in those states. Neither the revolution nor the Communist ideal motivated the Soviet leadership: most important to them were considerations of power strategy, and the Communist parties were simply a convenient method of imposing their power interests.

This process was successfully arrested by the West in Berlin, in Greece, and in Iran at the end of the 1940s and beginning of the 1950s, but Russia succeeded in obtaining what it considered to be a strategic security belt. Ironically, Western Communist intellectuals find it difficult to accept this view, since it implies that the Soviet leadership is completely cynical in the manipulation of its ideology. The Western anti-Communist thinkers fall into the same trap: they view the actions of the Soviet Union as if they were motivated by an ideology of world revolution, while in fact the leadership of the Soviet Union is guided by callous power calculations, which are fundamentally different from ideological absolutism. Thus, the Soviet Union has never had any qualms about sacrificing Communist parties (including the innocent idealists within them) for the sake of its power interests: so it was with the Stalin-Hitler pact, which sacrificed the prospects of the revolution in Germany on the altar of Soviet security considerations (which proved to be mistaken), and so it was at the time of the pact between the Soviet Union and Nasser's Egypt.

But the United States failed to learn the lesson from these events in time to perceive that the war in Vietnam was not the result of a global plan for world revolution but the result of local conditions. Instead of relating to the conflict there accordingly, America allowed itself to be drawn into the war, as if the fate of the free world would be decided in South Vietnam. The cold truth was that the choice in Vietnam was between dictatorship by the military and dictatorship by the Vietcong, whereas the fate of Western democracy, as well as the strategic world balance between the United States and the Soviet Union, was not dependent on the outcome of this conflict.

Here Bellow asked heatedly: Are you not sensitive to the Communist abuse of human rights, liberty, freedom of speech, in all the countries over which they have taken control?

Could anyone, I replied, not be sensitive to that? But here a difficulty arises. Except in the case of Czechoslovakia, the Communists have not succeeded in violently seizing control of any democratic country, as democracy has an inherent strength that enables it to compete with the aggressive character of communism. All the countries that are Communist today—whether in Eastern Europe, China, Southeast Asia, or Russia itself—were not democratic prior to the Communist take-over. What were Poland, Hungary, and Yugoslavia before they became Communist but military dictatorships and Fascist tyrannies and, in most cases, anti-Semitic as well? And Russia, before Communism? Would Lenin and his colleagues have succeeded in taking over Russia in 1917 had there been a durable democratic and liberal alternative at the time? And China before Mao-Tse-tung?

The tragedy of those countries was not the Communist take-over itself but the total absence of hope for any democratic alternative. As intellectuals, we must not use our opposition to Communist oppression to overlook the fact that the systems of government that were replaced by the Communist regimes were the dictatorships of Horthy and Antonescu, the Czar and the "Black Hundred," Chiang-Kai-chek, and the Generals of South Vietnam.

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The trouble is that there is still no democratic alternative in Eastern Europe, although the current struggle for human rights provides the possibility and offers the hope of a better future there. The alternative may possibly arise one day as a result of internal developments within the Communist regimes themselves, although with regard to Russia I am very pessimistic, for it is burdened with a tradition of 300 years of harsh oppression, from the days of Peter the Great to those of Stalin, and it still lacks a real social basis for the essential changes. But in Hungary, Rumania, or Poland there is, at least, an impressive improvement today in the standard of living of large segments of the population in contrast to the despicable poverty of the majority of the people in those countries under their previous regimes. There is no freedom there today, but there was also no freedom there (again, with the exception of Czechoslovakia) in the past.

However, it is possible that, along with the increase in social welfare, there will come demands for the right of freer expression, intellectual contacts with the West and freedom of travel there, and for a generally more open society. And indeed, in all of these countries, with the exception of Russia, a certain relaxation is now noticeable—a certain readiness, even if still with reservations, for some openness. The attitude to the Church in Poland and Hungary is beginning to be less oppressive, and in Rumania and Yugoslavia, at least, a change is beginning to be felt in attitudes toward their Jewish minorities. Even the Communist parties themselves are beginning to permit internal elections with more than one candidate for certain positions though, of course, still within the framework of the Communist party, which retains the monopoly of government.

Consequently, the picture has become far more complex and it now more closely resembles the difficulties involved in the establishment of democracy in any part of the world where it does not presently exist. Had there been democratic alternatives to Communist rule in those countries in the past, their present situation would most likely be different.

This was the nature of our luncheon conversation in the autumn of 1975. It came closer to being a lecture on my part than a conversation, since Bellow was interested in hearing rather than talking. He asked questions and listened carefully. We spoke very little about Israel and he refrained from any discussion of his literary work, which was what really interested me. I was somewhat disappointed but accepted the situation, as I imagined that every person with whom he talks is anxious to discuss literature with him and he wanted a change. We met a second time, in Miami in the Spring of 1976, at a Conference of the Friends of the Hebrew University, at which he was presented with the Agnon Prize in recognition of his literary achievements. Then we had an opportunity to discuss his writing in a little more detail.

When I compare my own notes of that conversation in November 1975 with the garbled and truncated report of it that Bellow recounts in his book, and which misconstrues the whole tenor of our meeting, I am surprised. I cannot believe that he distorted my words intentionally—because, as I envisage Bellow again in my memory, he is an engaging fellow, far from maliciously misrepresenting anyone's words.

This puzzle may, however, be explained by the difficulty encountered by an author—whose work is mainly in the realm of the imagination, the aesthetic, the selection and filtering of images from reality—when he attempts to switch roles and function as a researcher or a reporter. The researcher and the reporter must represent the literal truth: so-and-so said such-and-such, so-and-so answered thus, here are the quotation marks. For the author, on the other hand, reality is like clay in the hands of the potter; he can expand or contract it as he sees fit.

When, however, one fills one's book with the images of living people, as Saul Bellow did in *To Jerusalem and Back*, and not with creatures of the imagination such as Herzog, Sammler, or Humboldt, the picture is bound to be distorted. For then the author is no longer responsible to his own inner truth (whose creature a Herzog is), but to the real, objective truth; and here the contrast between fiction and reality is sharp and unavoidable. □

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George Eckstein

East German Writers: Walking a Tightrope

Not much East German writing has reached this country in the 30 years of that state's existence. The publication in 1977 of a slim volume of sensitive observations by the hitherto unknown Reiner Kunze, *The Wonderful Years* (New York: George Braziller), was an important event, and not only because of the book's unusual qualities (about which more later). It presents a good occasion for a brief look at that country's literature.

Literature *from*—not *of* or *in*—East Germany, this is the first thing to be said. For some of the best writing from beyond the Elbe River could not be published there, but reached the world through West German publishers, sometimes with, sometimes without permission of the East German authorities who pocket the greater part of the authors' royalties. Many of East Germany's more original writers have gone through long periods of silence, of cramping accommodations to official "suggestions," of detours onto the safer ground of lyric poetry or translation.

Periods of firm politico-cultural "direction" have been interspersed with periods of relaxation—but the regime is always there as schoolmaster, alternately patient and stern, holding out the public rewards of literary prizes and the private ones of jobs in publishing or the theater. Many authors have nevertheless gone into exile—a voluntary or, more and more lately, forced exile. Most have gone to West Germany with its ready public in the mother tongue, although, with the passing decades, there have come subtle changes in the languages of the two Germanies. Among the early exiles, aside from such pre-Hitler Marxists as the publicist Alfred Kantorowicz, the literary historian Hans Mayer, and the philosopher Ernst Bloch, there were such well-known novelists as Uwe Johnson and Gerhard Zwerenz. They did not always find the conservative and commercialized climate in West Germany ideal for their work.

Those who remained in the East accepted the official basis of their society more or less wholeheartedly. By choice in the case of the older postwar returnees, such writers as Brecht, Johannes Becher, Anna Seghers, Ludwig Renn, Stefan Heym, Stefan Hermlin (to name only the Communists among them); by having known little else in the case of the generation born after the '20s—such writers as Volker Braun, Rudolf Fries, Sarah and Rainer Kirsch, Günter Kunert, Reiner Kunze, Christa Wolf.

Among the older figures Becher, who like Brecht had made his start in post-World War I Expressionism, had been groomed during his Moscow exile for the role as culture commissar. Brecht, thanks to his international fame, enjoyed a certain freedom for his Berlin Ensemble Theater, paid for by occasional cynical bows to Caesar; he wrote little in the few years remaining to him after his return to Berlin in 1948. Anna Seghers, too, showed little of her former strength *(The Revolt of the Fishermen of St. Barbara* and *The Seventh Cross)* in the fiction she wrote after her return from Mexico. She actively tried to influence literary policies, notably during the attempts, after the XXth Congress, toward a "more open" realism. Ludwig Renn, the aristocrat whose famous book on World War I started him on the road to Communism, ended his days with pathetic children's stories about Papa Lenin. Heym and Hermlin, both from the Jewish upper-middle-class, never managed to conform. Heym, who had served in the U.S. Army during the war, had to have his latest book, the *King David Report,* a chronicle of

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Stalinism in biblical clothing, published in West Germany and the U.S. Hermlin, a sensitive poet, introduced many of his younger colleagues in public readings, including Rolf Biermann, the *enfant terrible* of political verse. Hermlin himself is full of doubt and resignation: "What if no one listens? Not even the new race/whose upheaving path you have joined with resolve?" His has become "A Time of Solitude":

But the door remains shut.
The street is bare. It is night.
I listen. Deep in the hearth
Burns the bygone fight.

THE YOUNGER generation has accepted, by and large with idealism, the official claims of its society, where the common good is supposed to have replaced private gain as motivation. Not a few of them are children of the working class and grateful to a regime that was the first to give them a chance at education. But as writers they cannot close their eyes to the remaining conflicts and contradictions. They strain against a leadership that wants to ban anything "negative" from its literature; things like *Existenzangst* or suicide must not exist. (In a country with one of the highest suicide rates in Europe!) They and the protagonists of their stories—as in Volker Braun's "Unfinished Story"—want to love and admire their Communist parents and the all-important Party secretary, pioneers of the New Era. Yet they rebel, not so much against the policeman as against the schoolmaster who tries to guide their every step with "friendly" coaxing and threatening pointed finger. Two very different but controversial novels of the last decade should illustrate the character of this East German writing.

The first, *Nachdenken über Christa T.*, by Christa Wolf, was published in this country in 1971 under the title *The Quest for Christa T.* The author, born in 1919, had already made a name for herself by being the first to openly treat Germany's division in *Der Geteilte Himmel (The Divided Sky),* published in 1963. In her new novel, the narrator tries to reconstruct, from past encounters, letters, and diaries, the experiences that have shaped the "life toward death" of her friend, dead of leukemia at 35—in reality a kind of suicide of a young woman, gentle, sensitive, inward-looking, and thus in conflict "with the new world of the fact-people, the hop-hop people without imagination." Most important of all, the search for her friend's essence forces the author/chronicler to reexamine herself and her own place in her society. As Wolf was to say later: "Suddenly I was facing myself—and that I had not foreseen."

The book itself had a curious history. Some passages appeared in literary periodicals in both East and West Germany prior to publication, which was announced for fall 1968 in the East. A critical review and a censorious comment were published in early 1969 in the two official East German literary magazines—but still no book. Finally, in May 1969, the grand total of 800 copies was printed and distributed to selected critics, bureaucrats, and libraries; none to the general public. In West Germany, where it had been licensed to a leading publishing house, *Christa T.* became an instant bestseller; undoubtedly finding its way to the East, despite or because of a concerted campaign denouncing it as negative, individualistic, asocial. But Wolf is not a rebel at all. In her essays—mainly on language and writing—she pays obeisance to the politics of the state. She simply refuses to abdicate the role of the creative author as mediator between reality and reader.

An outsider of a different kind is Edgar Wibeau, the young hero of Ulrich Plenzdorf's *Die neuen Leiden des jungen W. (The New Sorrows of Young W.),* published in the East in 1973. He is one of the new breed of messy-haired, blue-jeaned, jazz-loving young workers. He has read Salinger, speaks in a fresh idiom, kicks against the

Reiner Kunze Comments:

"Why did I not offer the manuscript [of *The Wonderful Years*] to a publishing house in East Germany?

"Mainly for two reasons: one because the highest authorities repeatedly demanded I should refrain from any comment on the situation of my Czechoslovak colleagues. This command goes against basic human values, and is here mentioned as representative of others. . . .

"Furthermore . . . because, before publication of my book *Letter with Blue Seal*, I had been promised it would be followed by publication of Wolf Biermann's work. To this day this promise has not been kept. You know that I do not agree with Biermann's concepts of the future of mankind. But where will we be if we abandon one another? Where are we now that most of us have abandoned one another? . . . "

— From a letter of September 29, 1976, published in the magazine Europäische Ideen *in its special edition "On Reiner Kunze."*

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constraints closing in all around him—an authoritarian Party-boss mother, school, trade union, Party youth organization. He runs away from his apprentice job and his provincial hometown to live illegally in East Berlin in an abandoned ramshackle shed. He paints, makes music, reads, communicates by tape with the only friend back home who knows his whereabouts. In between he works in a construction brigade, befriends a young teacher in a shy relationship, collides with union bureaucrats, is protected by an old Communist worker of pre-Hitler vintage. He putters around with old parts, trying to construct an improved valve for spraying paint. Attempting to rush his contraption to completion before the Union, the bulldozers, and his mother close in on him, he kills himself accidentally with high-voltage current.

The slim story, including its fatal end, is jotted down by the hero in the first person—fast, vibrant, nonchalant, colorful. It fulfills the request of the literary bureaucrats—to treat the new problems of "building socialism" now that its rule has become secure—but it does so with a vengeance. Is the nonconforming individualist also the better socialist *and* having a good time?—impossible! The book, and a play based on it, found a tremendous response among the young, workers and students alike. The bureaucrats were forced to temper their criticism with caution.

Title and subject matter of Plenzdorf's book refer to a German classic, Goethe's youthful novel *The Sorrows of Young Werther,* of which Plenzdorf's hero finds a ragged copy in his shed. In Christa Wolf there are hints of Kleist, another classic writer. Several leading playwrights draw openly on the classics. An effort to give legitimacy to the new culture? or an attempt to imitate Brecht? At any rate, the results are decidedly mixed. For example, when Volker Braun, in his *Hinze and Kunze,* transposes Goethe's *Faust* into the milieu of an East German industrial combine, with the CP Secretary/Mephisto guiding an eager foreman/Faust toward ever-greater projects while his engineer/Gretchen, in a hard choice between career or child, opts for abortion.

AS IN OTHER East European countries, some of the better writing is done in poetry. Public readings are popular. The irreverent political songs of Wolf Biermann, a sincere if unorthodox Communist, were huge successes; but since the early '60s he has not been allowed to perform, publish or record in the East. Many poets are also translators. Reiner Kunze, the miner's son, is a poet who has done fine translations of the work of his Czech poet-friends, some of which are included in *The Wonderful Years.* Kunze's first book in East Germany, back in 1961, consisted of translations from the Czech. All the remaining copies were ordered shredded the following year. For a while, he went back to factory work. Twice during the years to come he was fined for unauthorized publication in West Germany. He expressed his situation in his usual lapidary way: "I am K./and live/here/The poet/has moved/Address/unknown." Again and again he reverts to the theme of creative growth vs. bureaucratic straightjacket, as in "Diary page 74," published in 1975 in the West German periodical *Akzente*:

> But I do not wish to join
> the chorus
> (Rather sprout ever new limbs to foil
> the axe
> Rather spread out again and again
> the divining rods of the roots).

Unlike his friend Biermann who shares the regime's basic politics but rebels against its restrictions, Kunze cannot reconcile himself with the basic inhumanity of a system that arrogates to itself the right to shape all persons into a common mold. In the spare prose of *The Wonderful Years*, well-rendered in Johann Neugroschel's translation, he evokes the web in which the regime is trying to catch its children, the length to which it goes in enforcing conformity; but he shows, too, the subtle ways in which individuals resist—from the teenage girl sporting an American hippie "PEACE & LOVE" canvas bag to the bunches of flowers with which German co-workers pay silent homage to a Czech colleague at the very time when East German troops help quell the Prague Spring.

Yet Kunze loves his country: "Trapped in this land/which I'd choose again and again." Now he has been forced into exile, not many weeks after Wolf Biermann, and despite the tremendous protest that the latter's expulsion in December 1976 had provoked among East German writers and artists. Among those who protested were most of the authors here mentioned, including Sarah Kirsch, CP member and president of the writers' association, who promptly was deposed from office, expelled from the Party, and, a few months later, exiled. A new period of intolerance seems to have begun. But there will be few if any arrests. Some writers will be forced into exile; some will be bought off with prizes and honors; some will keep their work in the drawer for a better day. But these are not the conditions under which a literature can grow with more than intermittent flashes of promise. □

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Alexander Motyl

Soviet Dissidents and Eurocommunism

A volatile relationship binds the Communist parties of France, Italy, and Spain, the Communist party of the Soviet Union (CPSU), and the Soviet dissenters espousing variuos Marxist tendencies. Central to the instability of this relationship are the attempts by the Eurocommunist parties to achieve their political goals by electoral means.

For want of a better term, those Soviet dissenters espousing a nonofficial form of socialism will be characterized as "dissident Marxists." Their commitments to Marxism may vary, but insofar as it is not of the official CPSU sort, it is "dissident."

AT THEIR JUNE 1976 Berlin Conference, the Communist parties of France, Italy, and Spain proclaimed before a generally skeptical world their readiness to follow independent and democratic policies in their own countries. In affirming their independence, however, Western Communists were not condemning the Soviet system; they were only rejecting the "leading role" of the CPSU. The French Communist party's (PCF) decision to drop the politically inexpedient term "dictatorship of the proletariat" at its February 1976 Congress is an example of this attitude.

Insofar as the Berlin participants avoided making references to the Soviet Union (Santiago Carrillo's remark that Moscow serves as "the Communist Rome" is the leading exception) and instead limited themselves to general statements, this event was much less significant than might be concrete criticisms of Soviet policy. It is one thing to *proclaim* oneself a democrat, as was done in Berlin or in the joint French-Italian CP declaration of 1975; it is quite another to acknowledge that the source of one's inspiration is not democratic. The Marxist and other dissidents in the U.S.S.R. understand this very well—they have repeatedly made clear that there is no convincing reason to accept the sincerity of Eurocommunist assertions of democracy, unless these are accompanied by strong criticism of the Soviet Union and a realization that "noninterference" in CPSU affairs implies tacit approval of Soviet policies. A condemnation, however mild, of the invasion of Czechoslovakia or of Soviet mistreatment of such dissenters as Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn, Leonid Plyushch, or Vladimir Bukovsky is a much more emphatic rejection of Stalinism than the proclamation of one's own virtues.

The point of such criticism also is clear. In view of the electoral gains of the French left in the past few years, as well as of the Italian CP's (PCI) steady electoral advances, CP participation in the government of these nations has become a distinct possibility. Continued assertions of Westernism and a distancing from the monolithic aspects of the world Communist movement are intended to serve as proof of national patriotism and democratic conviction.

Toward the dissident movement in the Soviet Union, the Western CPs have taken an apolitical and "classless" line, stressing the importance of human rights as distinctly *human* rights. In this respect, the French and Italian CPs' concern over Solzhenitsyn in 1973 as well as the PCF's editorial defense of Plyushch in 1975 are closer to "bourgeois" positions on the human rights question than it is convenient for them to admit. The latter instance is particularly noteworthy because of Plyushch's avowed Marxism. *L'Humanité*, however, completely ignored the Ukrainian mathematician's politics (as well as the more explosive issue of the repression of a Communist by a Communist state) and instead vaguely affirmed only his right to disagree with the Soviet regime:

> If it is true, and unhappily until now there has been no proof to the contrary, that the mathematician is interned in a psychiatric hospital because he has taken a stance against some aspects of Soviet policy or against the regime itself, we can only confirm with the greatest clarity our total disapproval and demand that he be liberated as quickly as possible.[1]

The mildness of the statement is all the more striking in light of the fact that it appeared the day after a non-Communist, left-wing rally in defense of the Ukrainian at which the PCF was sharply criticized for its lack of participation.

This emphasis on human rights has continued up to the present, manifesting itself most recently in widespread CP criticism of the repressive measures taken against the East European supporters of Charter 77. That the Eurocommunists should thus far have avoided criticizing "aspects of Soviet policy" from a Marxist point of view is not

[1]M.I. Holubenko, "Plyushch and the French Communist Party," *META*, 1: 2 (1976), p. 33.

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surprising. To do so would have been to imply that the whole Soviet system is open to a Marxist critique. But according to the official Soviet position, the U.S.S.R. has long since eliminated those systemic characteristics that typify bourgeois societies. Such a critique of the U.S.S.R. would mean a rejection of the Soviet system—a step that none of the Eurocommunist parties is at present prepared to take, since too hasty a move away from the CPSU could undermine their own organizational and ideological foundations.

Dissident Marxists pose an even greater difficulty for the Eurocommunists. To defend a Marxist as a Marxist comes close to endorsing that dissenter's nonofficial Marxism. While this may not be overly problematic in the case of someone like Roy Medvedev, it becomes exceedingly so with someone like Plyushch. An Italian Communist delegation visited Medvedev in early 1977 to present him with a copy of an Italian-language translation of one of his works. This visit, however, was not quite the provocatory gesture it was made out to be by the Western press, for the dissent of Medvedev is very much that of a "loyal opposition." Medvedev sees little wrong with the social structure as such, finds the national question to be a nuisance more than anything else, and is generally satisfied that the Soviet Union is socialist. For Medvedev, the lack of democratic procedure is the only substantive problem. No wonder the Italians found in the Russian Marxist an ideological compatriot. On the other hand, to endorse a Marxist such as Plyushch is at present inconceivable, because his brand of Marxism provides a radical analysis of the Soviet Union as a state-capitalist and nationally repressive system.

THE EFFECT of the Communists' occasional "anti-Soviet" outbursts is twofold. First, they serve to enhance the CPs' democratic image at home and thereby help garner votes. What is less obvious, and probably unprovable, is that such public protests against violations of human rights in the U.S.S.R. exert an indirect form of pressure on the Kremlin to be less harsh toward dissenters.

This is certainly understood to be so by the numerous Soviet Communist and non-Communist dissidents who make appeals to the Western CPs. While one can only speculate whether Western Communist criticism in 1973 of Soviet treatment of Solzhenitsyn saved the writer from imprisonment, it seems likely in the case of Leonid Plyushch's release in January 1976. The campaign in defense of Plyushch waged by various groups in the West seemed to be headed for the same fate as that of other such unsuccessful actions. But after the PCF's interest in the matter in late 1975, Moscow seemed almost to respond directly with Plyushch's release a few months later.

If it is true that criticism of the Soviet Union is politically expedient for the Eurocommunists and beneficial to Soviet dissenters, then it logically follows that the greater this criticism becomes, the greater the political advantages for the Western Communists are likely to be. However, the closer the Eurocommunists come to achieving "respectability," the less will this benefit Soviet dissenters, because the further the Western parties deviate from the Soviet line, the less impact is their criticism of the U.S.S.R. likely to have on the Kremlin.

The political expedience of criticizing the U.S.S.R. is well illustrated by the different attitudes taken toward the question by the French and Italians on the one hand, and the Spanish on the other. Not only was the Spanish General Secretary more blunt in his remarks concerning the leading role of the CPSU at the Berlin Conference, but Carrillo's statement—that the "*Soviet Union is not really a popular democracy but a dictatorship of a small layer of the country over the rest of the society*"[2]—goes a long way toward being a Marxist critique of the Soviet Union. Not surprisingly, neither Marchais nor Berlinguer shared the Spaniard's sentiment. That Carrillo should have made this and similar judgments (as, for example, his comment in an interview published in *Corriere della sera* at the time of the 25th CPSU Congress that the Soviet Union's "socialism is in a primitive state with the marks of the feudal order that it destroyed. This is why socialism in the West must be different from the Soviet kind"[3]) is understandable if one looks at Spain's current political dynamics. While the Italians and the French have already achieved a certain degree of legitimacy and are not hard pressed to make further concessions to their democratic systems, the Spanish CP has to make the type of grand gesture that will make it acceptable. Carrillo's success in getting his party legalized seems to a large extent the result of his "anti-Sovietism."

Significantly, the French have recently taken a large step in the direction of the Spanish by maintaining public contacts with Plyushch at both

[2]"Not Being too Beastly to Moscow," *Time*, March 14, 1977, p. 23.

[3]Wlodzimierz Sznarbachowski, "Evropeys'ky komunizm i Skhidnya Evropa," *Suchasnist*, 11: 191 (1976), pp. 82-83.

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the Central Committee and local levels. Although Marchais and Plyushch have been fairly critical of each other, the fact that *L'Humanité* ran an open letter from Plyushch to the French General Secretary on February 26, 1977 reveals that a dialogue of some sort exists between the two sides. While this hardly indicates that the French have been converted to Plyushch's views, their willingness even to be associated with so thorough an "anti-Soviet renegade" is a sign of distancing from the U.S.S.R.

Ironically, however, Eurocommunist success in the West may increase hardships of dissidents in the Soviet Union. A Western CP that integrates itself into the fabric of "bourgeois democratic" politics may thereby lose the levers of influence with its Soviet ally. For then CP criticism of the U.S.S.R. ceases to be "fraternal" and joins the "chorus of the troubadours of anti-Communism."

Such a development, while not helpful to dissidents in danger of prison, could greatly affect the *character* of dissent in the Soviet Union. Should a Eurocommunist party approach some form of government power without sacrificing its commitment to democracy and to socialism, it would set an influential precedent by offering a viable model of socialism. Soviet dissident Marxism, in particular, would stand to undergo far-reaching changes.

ALTHOUGH IT IS impossible to determine the present strength of the dissident Marxist current within the U.S.S.R., it is at least clear that some such current does exist, that it was particularly strong in the late '60s and early '70s, and that its social base is, as Plyushch maintains, rooted in the provinces.

Significantly, of the 23 known, post-Stalinist dissident Marxist groups, more than half existed between the years 1968 and 1971. In 1968-69 alone, at least seven such groups were founded. Considering the extensive favorable coverage given the Prague Spring in Samizdat writings by such dissident Communists as P. Grigorenko, A. Kosterin, I. Yakhimovich, and I. Gabai, it is probably true that a direct link existed between the attempt to install a "socialism with a human face" and the fairly sudden rise of numerous dissident Marxist groups in the U.S.S.R. Seeing a model of socialism as "it should be," dissident Marxists were able to resurrect Marxism as a visibly workable approach to reality. A similar sprouting of dissident Marxism may very well take place if a Eurocommunist party were successfully to assume the role of a model. □

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Abraham Brumberg

Wheeling and Dealing in the U.S.S.R.

IN STALIN'S TIME: MIDDLE-CLASS VALUES IN SOVIET FICTION, by Vera S. Dunham. London and New York: Cambridge University Press. 383 pp., $16.95.

It is the central thesis of Professor Dunham's extraordinary book that toward the end of World War II the Soviet regime, weakened by a chain of devastating catastrophes, having lost its revolutionary zeal and with it the loyalty of most of its early supporters—the workers and the intelligentsia—entered into a "concordat" with the rising middle class, which was eventually to result in the abandonment of mass terror and the creation of a fundamentally stable, complacent, and—*mutatis mutandis*—well-functioning social order. This concordat, or alliance—or, as she engagingly calls it, the "Big Deal"—was introduced in the years preceding Stalin's death, gained rapid momentum in its aftermath, creaked and groaned its way through the reign of the ebulliently unpredictable Nikita Khrushchev, and was finally consummated by the lacklustre leadership of Brezhnev & Co. The workers have been conveniently jettisoned. The peasantry never entered into the calculations of any Bolshevik leaders, from Lenin on, except as a constituency to be lied to and exploited, and it remains as downtrodden today as it was 50 or 60 years ago. The intelligentsia—the *true* intelligentsia, that is—had been decimated by Stalin (read Nadezhda Mandelstam's memoirs), and while its old spirit of independent thinking and political defiance has recently begun to reassert itself, this merely makes it an even more unreliable partner for the Soviet elite.

It was, therefore, to the vast "new legion of productive engineers, organizers, administrators, and managers" that the Soviet leadership turned for support. Their skills were desperately needed in a country that was not only trying to repair past ravages but to become a modern industrial state. They were (and are) largely apolitical, conformist, craving security, material comfort and social prestige, hostile to egalitarianism, and imbued with that special kind of Russian philistinism, *meshchanstvo* (from the word *meshchanin*—bourgeois)— a "mentality that is vulgar, imitative, greedy, and ridden with prejudice." In a brilliant chapter, Dunham traces the survival of traditional Russian *meshchanstvo*—despised by such Bolshevik bards as Vladimir Mayakovsky—and the emergence of a new form under Stalin, when "striving for material goods became an obligation and this imperative became functional," that is to say, when "the profit motif became the basis of Stalin's state capitalism." The traditional *meshchanin* dreamed of "sweets and pink lampshades"; the typical "systemic" *meshchanin* is the "soulless, greedy, pompous" official who craves power. It was only natural, then, that the two fused to produce the social class that is by now the very backbone of the Soviet system.

The reader who expects to find this thesis illustrated by means of heavy verbiage, statistical tables, and other such paraphernalia of contem-

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porary social science will be pleasantly surprised; Professor Dunham is not a student of sociology but a voracious reader and interpreter of Soviet literature. It is Soviet *belles-lettres,* and primarily what she calls "middlebrow fiction," a genre that can hardly be savored for its literary qualities, that constitutes the raw material for her political and sociological analysis.

Professor Dunham is not the first to use Soviet literature for insights into *la vie Sovietique.* One of the deans of American Sovietology, Professor Alexander Gerschenkron of Harvard University, long ago called attention to this valuable source of information. His call has been heeded by a number of other distinguished specialists. Yet none of them, it seems to me, has done it with as much sagacity, humor, and verve as Dunham. Nor, to my knowledge, has anyone dealt so perceptively with the function of popular literature in the U.S.S.R. From the regime's point of view, literature has always had to serve patently didactic purposes. (With his penchant for crude hyperboles, Stalin called writers "engineers of human souls.") It has been, in Dunham's words, "a platform from which the system justified itself," an "embodiment of the regime's considerata, a repository of its myths." For the average reader, literature has played, in its way, an equally important role. The spectacle of Soviet citizens in a crowded bus or metro train, avidly engrossed in some contemporary work of fiction, has never ceased to astonish the Western tourist. The standard explanation is that Soviet readers prefer novels, since newspapers in their country are a crushing bore and magazines are not much better.

Yet, as Dunham demonstrates, this is only part of the answer. To Soviet readers, pop fiction is—despite its obvious cant and bizarre distortions—a reflection or part of life itself. They enter the dramas that unfold in its pages with curiosity and passion, tend to identify themselves with or be repelled by its characters, to recognize its values, aspirations, and problems, to discuss them in their homes and to vent their opinions (with surprising candor) in letters to editors, authors, and critics. The function of "middlebrow fiction" to the middlebrow readers is cathartic: the regime knows, encourages, and exploits it. By scrutinizing hundreds of novels, plays, and poems, Dunham convincingly illustrates this point; and in the course of her book she fully justifies her claim that fiction can be used to illuminate important areas of Soviet reality, especially relations between the people and the regime.

Perhaps one demurrer is in order: it seems to me that Professor Dunham rather overstates her case for the *type* of accommodation reached between the Soviet regime and the middle class. A deal, "big" or small, is usually transacted between two equal partners, each of whom has something substantial to offer to the other. Yet, even though she occasionally describes the relationship between the two partners in almost commercial terms ("material values were laid on the bargaining table. . ."), her examples show again and again that the middle class was (at least in Stalin's time) as much a victim of the regime as any other class. Its material rewards were greater, and eventually they were to assume a decisive importance. But, it lived in a state of acute insecurity, it was subjected continuously to capricious, contradictory, brutal, and arbitrary demands. As between the carrot and the stick, the emergent bourgeoisie got a good part of the former; yet it lived in constant fear of the latter as well.

The party official or the factory manager, both typical "positive heroes" of Stalinist *belles-lettres* and thus frequently referred to by Dunham, clearly obtained their rewards. At the same time, they were forever caught in a vise of contradictory demands. They could have power—but were compelled to pay obeisance to the official rhetoric about "collectivism." They could lord it over their subordinates but were told to be attentive to their individual grievances. They were encouraged to achieve—but not to overachieve; to be dignified (read: arrogant) vis-à-vis the workers and docile toward their superiors; to enrich themselves but never to lose sight of the party's ostensible goal of contentment for *everyone.* And they were also the hapless pawns of a shifting party line.

Thus, in a play cited by Dunham the villain (there is *always* a villain) is manager of a machine-building plant. He is a bully, an oaf so drunk with success as to refer to the enterprise he manages as "my plant." Ignoring the (then) legitimate needs of light industry, he collides with the local party secretary—the sympathetic spokesman for the rights and aspirations of the common citizen. The play was written while the country was going through one of its periodic "antimanager" campaigns; and the playwright (then and to this day a faithful party hack) was doing what he thought was expected of him. By the time the play was finally staged, however, the official line had changed. Central planning and the overriding superiority of heavy industry were now the order of the day, and so the official critics let loose upon the playwright,

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whose "crime" was simply lack of omniscience. Professor Dunham writes:

> The regime wants the manager to be both effective and unobtrusive, strong and pliable, inventive and docile. In the reappraisal of the play one should see only the continuous cyclical alteration of emphasis, not a change of policy.

True, but it is precisely this cyclical alteration that made even the lives of the (eventual) beneficiaries of the "Big Deal" a hell of tension and insecurity.

THE BOOK IS studded with so many gems that one is hard put to select any for special mention. There is a marvelous chapter on women (family and sex are not to be sneezed at, as long as the Plan is fulfilled), another on recalcitrant academics (who unlike managers and engineers must not be overly preoccupied with their welfare and personal concerns); there are splendid pages on workers, on social climbing, on the fusion of romantic love with the adoration of Stalin. (A sturdy lass to her lover: "Tell me, do you have a sacred dream? You know what I mean? A fantastic dream, an almost impossible one, but such that you do not wish to part with it. Do you have one?" He: "I do. [He meditates.] I would like to have a talk with Comrade Stalin.") The book also offers a wealth of marginal insights into Soviet life, such as the petty and vicious intrigues with which Soviet institutions are infected, or the daily hardships of Soviet family life.

What the book makes unmistakably clear is that the process of embourgeoisement had indeed started in the late '30s, and that it now reigns supreme. In the 1920s, individualism in *any* form was bitterly decried by the leaders and ideologues of the new state. The ideal of Soviet fiction—the perfect *homo sovieticus*—was one who sacrificed himself for the collective, to the detriment not only of his personal ego and values, but to that of his closest relatives as well. His inspiration was to be the glorious future; he was not "to expect anything in return"—the returns were to come in the next generation, perhaps even later. This is no longer the case. As Dunham's literary examples demonstrate, private values and personal upward mobility have not only come to predominate, not only to be accepted, but to be apotheosized. The simple workers with calloused hands, selflessly building the brave new world, were replaced by the producer, the skilled technician, the engineer, or the party secretary who is wise enough to let the manager run his enterprise, however tyrannically, as long as he succeeds and pays lip service to the official cant.

In one novel an engineer explains to his superior his difficulties with the woman he loves:

> You understand, she is a worker. It seems to me that it will be difficult for us to get along. Well, how can I explain it to you? I wanted to raise her so that she should find out about everything, about museums, theatres, books, lectures. But I feel that she gets bored with all that.

In another novel, one student confides to his friend:

> You and I, brother, cannot prematurely acquire a family. It's absolutely impossible for us. Now we must start learning. Now we must start, as they say, pushing ahead to become somebody.

Not, mind you, pushing ahead for the good of the people, for the good of the party, for the good of Communism, but "to become somebody." This is the hallmark of the new Soviet ethos that Vera Dunham so magnificently captures in her book.□

Lewis Coser

French Connections

From Sartre to Althusser, Existential Marxism in Postwar France, by Mark Poster. Princeton: Princeton University Press. xii + 415 pp. $17.50.

Before World War II, no indigenous Marxian tradition existed in France. Stalinist hacks dominated the scene, and the socialist movement largely subsisted on a thin gruel of traditional Marxist ideas mixed with generous infusions of Jacobin ideology and native "utopian socialist" ingredients. All this changed abruptly after the liberation. We were now witness to various characteristically French attempts to revitalize Marxist philosophical reflections, partly through a return to Hegel, and to reinterpret Marxism in tune with other philosophical traditions such as phenomenology, existentialism, and, somewhat later, structuralism. It is this development that Poster has attempted to depict. His book is a lucidly written and conscientiously documented guide for those who have been perplexed by the somewhat bewildering profusion of French Marxist and proto-Marxist philosophical currents in the postwar period.

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It all began with the discovery and reception of Hegel's thought in France over a hundred years after the death of the master. Up to that time the French, in their intellectual provincialism, held fast to the Cartesian tradition and kept their distance from what appeared to them the speculative excesses of post-Kantian German idealism. But the old certainties and the received wisdom of the French rationalistic tradition crumbled during the ordeal of defeat and resistance. The young men and women who emerged out of the non-Communist resistance movement, as well as those who in the next two decades broke with Stalinism, searched for a doctrine that would link their sense of the passing of the old bourgeois order to their passionate expectations of the coming of a socialist society, as well as to their concern with personal autonomy and authenticity that had been forged in the resistance movement and among those who had ultimately succeeded in freeing themselves from Stalinist thought control.

The Hegel whom the young intellectuals discovered, mainly through the lectures, commentaries, and translations of two maverick philosophers, Alexandre Kojève and Jean Hyppolite, was largely the author of the *Phenomenology*, rather than the later conservative interpreter of the *Philosophy of Right*. Their concern was with the dialectical method and, in particular, with Hegel's penetrating portrayal of the dialectic relation between Master and Slave. Thus, from the beginning, the French Hegel-renaissance involved a pronouncedly left-wing interpretation of Hegel. It went together with a new appreciation of the humanist neo-Hegelian philosophy of the young Marx, especially after the latter's *Parisian Manuscripts of 1844* had become available in French.

Once the stranglehold of Cartesian thought on French intellectual life had been broken, not only Hegel and the young Marx, but Nietzsche, German phenomenology and existentialism, and finally structuralism and psychoanalysis made triumphant entries on the French intellectual scene. The famous *clarté française* gave way to a new philosophical language, often degenerating into a jargon that mixed German ponderousness with French *esprit*, if not, sometimes, hot air.

Tracing these developments in considerable detail, Poster correctly gives pride of place to Jean Paul Sartre's intellectual trajectory, from the radical individualism and voluntarism of his early work to the attempt at developing an existential Marxism in his *Critique de la raison dialectique* of 1960. Poster also offers a detailed discussion of the evolution of Sartre's onetime companion and later adversary Maurice Merleau-Ponty, who moved from an extreme Hegelian historicism that led him to justify even the Moscow trials to the later relatively apolitical writings on phenomenology. A special chapter is devoted to the contributors to the magazine *Arguments*, a little band, mostly of former Stalinists, who under the leadership of Edgar Morin and Kostas Axelos attempted between 1956 and 1965 to fuse elements of a highly critical Marxism with as diverse streams of thought as those of Heidegger, Freud, and Sartre.

THE MAJOR PORTIONS of the book are devoted to the emergence of the synthetic existential Marxism that dominated the French intellectual scene until the middle of the '60s. But the final sections also take account of the emergence of structuralist thought, which has largely replaced existential Marxism in the last decade and a half. Poster's treatment of Lévi-Strauss, Lacan, Foucault, and Althusser is less thorough than that of their predecessors, yet the main lineaments of their thought nevertheless emerge quite well.

While the preceding generation, forged during the resistance and the war, strove to arrange a kind of forced marriage between Kierkegaard and Marx, the structuralists, especially the Communist philosopher Althusser, developed a "theoretical antihumanism." In a decided overreaction to the "soft" subject-centered humanism of their predecessors, the structuralists presented a "hard," object-centered, structural analysis. While the generation of Sartre based their philosophy on the self-creation of humankind through history, the structuralists pointed to forces that were not deliberately created by, yet were governing, human beings. Such hidden structures as myths, kinship, and desire operated unconsciously and hence were removed from deliberate control. Hidden rules, so these philosophers argued, constricted and constrained the boundaries of thought and discourse. While the existential Marxists had extolled creative energies, attempting to trace the stages through which humans make themselves, the structuralists attempted to debase the stature of the human subject, of consciousness, of the ego. Their antihumanist objectivism aimed at displacing humanity from the center of reality. "Is Man Dead?" is the title of one of Foucault's essays. Even though most of the structuralists claimed to belong to the left, one cannot help but feel that they reflect the progressive disillusionment of many French intellectuals with the possibilities of a decisive transformation of French society by socialist

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forces. Analysis often replaced Praxis. The stabilized consumer society may be repulsive, but it seems to have squelched the Promethean visions that animated the preceding generation.

The author provides a reliable guide to these ideas. What is strange, though, especially for a Marxian scholar, is his neglect of the social, political, and existential context in which these ideas arose. Unfortunately Poster chose, as he says, "not to deviate very far . . . from the traditional methodological boundaries [of intellectual history]." As a result, he missed the occasion to evoke in some detail the milieu and the concrete events that surely left a major mark on these works. He did interview a number of key figures, but his book reads nevertheless as if it had been written from library notes in California.

Poster falls short more seriously when it comes to the assessment of the ideas he lucidly expounds. He seems to be in love with existential Marxism of the French variety, and hence shows a lack of critical distance when it comes to its evaluation. (He is markedly more critical in regard to structuralism.) This lack of distance makes him, among other things, fail to discriminate between major thinkers such as Sartre or Merleau-Ponty, and minor *littérateurs* or trendy journalists. For example, he overlooks the uneven quality of the writing in *Arguments*, which contained some worthwhile work but also a good deal of *tout Paris* fashionable cleverness and radical chic. There were quite a number of modish celebrity intellectuals among the authors he discusses, and these should have been clearly distinguished from the serious thinkers. Not all who used Heideggerian jargon or Hegelian terminology knew what they were talking about. Paris had its share of French McLuhans. The same lack of critical distance accounts for the author's inflated estimate of the overall accomplishments of French Marxist existentialism. Some of these thinkers indeed made important contributions, but to claim that they inaugurated a "major intellectual revolution, a second Enlightment," seems to me exaggerated.

TO POSTER, the events of May 1968, the student revolt and the resultant occupation of factories in Paris and other parts of the country appear as major turning points in French history that have tested and vindicated the theories of the existential Marxists. This is a view that may well have been held by the participants and their contemporaries, but it can hardly be seriously sustained ten years later. What seems now a rather strange interlude in the history of postwar France becomes in Poster's romantic imagination an event almost as important as the storming of the Bastille. "For a brief moment," he writes, "France tasted life beyond alienation." A few thousand students may have felt that way, but it is a distortion to equate them with all of France. Would that the author, at least in his capacity of intellectual historian, had somewhat toned down his sentimental utopianism, which, even though often quite appealing, too often turns into plain woolliness. He might profitably have borrowed a leaf from our late friend George Lichtheim, who, writing about some of the same figures in his brilliant book on French Marxism, never departed from his hard-nosed realistic skepticism even when confronted with the most appealing concoctions of the French mind. In the same way, Poster's loving appraisal of the later Sartre might profitably be read together with Lionel Abel's cold and sharply critical dissection in *Dissent* (Spring 1961).

Despite these caveats, I recommend the book to anybody who is seriously concerned with French existential Marxism and structuralist thought; I can hardly think of a better introduction. □

Adele S. Paroni

Changing Catholics

THE AMERICAN CATHOLIC: A SOCIAL PORTRAIT, by Andrew M. Greely. New York: Basic Books. 280 pp. $15.

Although Andrew Greeley has written this book to be read primarily by non-Catholics, its in-depth sociological portrait of today's Catholic will also surprise and enlighten most Catholics. Much of the material will not be entirely new to followers of Greeley's prodigious scholarly and journalistic output. He has drawn liberally from his previous works and added fascinating, fresh information to flesh out what might well be called the "compleat Catholic of the 1970s."

Greeley is concerned here primarily with Catholic people, not with the church as an institution. His thesis is that the lives, status, attitudes, and feelings of the Catholic population

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have been so completely distorted in the national consciousness in past years that the public perceives Catholics as merely a set of stereotypes.

He further claims that these false assumptions about Catholics have promoted a "cultural division of labor" or, more bluntly, a "sophisticated discrimination" against Catholics in this country. Most Catholics have not even been aware of this discrimination, which, Greeley maintains, has prevented the Catholic intelligentsia from attaining prestige positions in our society.

Using a mass of sociological data from surveys conducted by the National Opinion Research Center and others over the past 15 years, Greeley sets out to demolish the myths and set the record straight—with facts. He begins by setting down some of the things "everyone knows" about Catholics.

For example, "everyone knows" Catholics tend to be blue-collar workers of the lower middle class, trailing Protestants in education and economic achievement. Greeley demonstrates each of these assumptions to be false. His research shows Irish Catholics are the most successful gentile group in the U.S. both financially and educationally; Catholics are no longer disproportionately blue-collar workers; and they are more likely than Protestants to be members of the middle class (taking into account race, region of the country, and urbanism).

Similarly, "everybody knows" that Catholics are political conservatives, hawks, and racially prejudiced. Again, false. His evidence shows that Catholics turn out to be liberal on issues that win elections, more dovish than hawkish and less likely to be anti-Semitic than Jews are to be anti-Catholic, for instance. In fact, anti-Catholic feeling appears to be on the rise, while "Catholic antagonism to other groups is not."

Most Catholic priest are not happy in their vocations; most would marry given the chance. Celibacy makes it impossible for them to develop a capacity for openness, intimacy, and sympathy with human frailty. The Research shows otherwise. Most Catholic priests are happy in their work; only a minority would marry if they were free to do so. Psychological testing does not show them deficient in their capacity for intimacy.

FOR THIS detailed picture, Greeley has scrutinized all areas of Catholic life from ethnic backgrounds (encompassing Germans, Irish, Italians, French, Slavs, Poles) political behavior, prejudice, changes in church and clergy, to the parochial school system, influences of the neighborhood, family structure, even moral values. In studying the effects of Catholic schooling, for example, he sought answers tc charges that Catholics schools are divisive in our society, that they are educationally inferior and impede their student's social and occupational success. Greeley found there is nothing in his data to support these views. To the contrary, the Catholic-school-educated seem more supportive of racial integration and have a higher level of social consciousness than those who do not attend Catholic schools. Far from being an obstacle to economic success, a Catholic education seems positively to facilitate financial achievement.

In a chapter assessing Catholic values, 20 "moral vignettes"—examples of moral problems confronted by most adults at one time or another—are used to evaluate the moral styles of the three main religious groups in the U.S. The author acknowledges the extreme difficulty of measuring the subtle and complex issues of moral decision-making, but concludes that there is a broad consensus among Americans about what is right and what is wrong. The similarities of moral style among the three main denominational groups are much greater than the dissimilarities. To the extent that Catholics do differ, they are somewhat more "flexible," or less "strict," than Protestants, and rather less "flexible" and more "strict" than Jews in their approach to solving moral problems.

Greeley devotes a chapter to the turmoil and changes in the American church. He finds that the recent decline in religious practice among Catholics and the current disarray of the institutional church date not from the ecumenical reforms of Pope John's Vatican II, as other interpreters of Catholicism claim. But, as he firmly believes, from the other major event of Catholic life in the 1960s—Pope Paul's encyclical, *Humanae Vitae*, which reaffirmed the church's prohibition of artificial birth control. In his data he found "no evidence to link the Council to the decline in Catholic belief and practice, but substantial evidence linking that decline to a rejection of the church's sexual ethic and erosion of the credibility of papal leadership." It's a thesis Greeley returns to again and again—with research to back him up. He is an outspoken critic of Catholic leadership in its failure to respond to the crisis of conscience endured by many Catholics which was precipitated by the encyclical, and warns that prospects for the future of the institutional church in America are not encouraging.

Greeley is counting on the Catholic collectivity, however. He maintains that it certainly will not vanish. He projects as a positive result of the

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institutional decline the emergence of a new type of American Catholic, "communal Catholics." They will be loyal to the collectivity, but will shrug off the teaching authority of the institutional church. Communal Catholics will be more educated, sophisticated, selective in their style of Catholicism. Products of the more fluid, pluralistic church after Vatican II, they will be Catholic because they have seen nothing else in American society they want to be. They will not be unperturbed by the "cultural division of labor" and anti-Catholic mythology that supports and prolongs it, as working- and middle-class Catholics have been. These new-style Catholics are quite likely to storm the barriers that keep them out of the world of the intellectual, cultural, journalistic, and administrative elite of the nation.

Enriching, enlightening, and controversial, *The American Catholic* indeed is a powerful consciousness-raiser that can benefit readers of all persuasions. Demolishing stereotypes and laying to rest false assumptions and myths about one group of Americans can be a force for raising sensibilities and reducing prejudices among all groups. □

David Wieck

Native Anarchists

PARTISANS OF FREEDOM: A STUDY IN AMERICAN ANARCHISM, by William O. Reichert. Bowling Green: Bowling Green University Popular Press. 602 pp. $25.

The American anarchist tradition, which dates back to the 1840s and has earlier antecedents, has never been well interpreted; apart from mention of one or two conspicuous individuals, it is seldom noticed in studies of America's radical past. In part this is because the anarchism that became self-conscious in the 1840s was individualist in emphasis, while the anarchism that dates from the 1880s, from the Chicago anarchists, was communist, syndicalist, or collectivist. The former was "yankee" in character, the latter was mainly a movement of proletarian immigrants, and its history is as yet unpublished and largely irrecoverable. It is tempting to see a clean discontinuity. In recent years, particularly under the influence of "libertarians" and "right-wing anarchists," the apparent discontinuity has come to be read, tendentiously, as a difference between two opposite kinds of anarchism, with 19th-century individualism as the forerunner of the curious and distinctively American phenomenon called "anarcho-capitalism."

Until radical feminists rediscovered Emma Goldman, the anarchism that "reappeared" in the 1960s had little consciousness of an American anarchist past. But the continuity was perpetuated in the writings of Paul Goodman, who had first-hand acquaintance with the older traditions.

It is slightly awkward for me to recommend William O. Reichert's *Partisans of Freedom* as a means toward better acquaintance with those traditions. I have a certain small place in that book. By reason of the same circumstance, however, I think that I can perceive the strengths and weaknesses of his work. Reichert's book is not a history—he has not attempted that. Neither is it quite a "study," though he calls it that, if from a study one expects close critical evaluation of what is presented, namely, what particular American anarchists have "said and believed." The book should be regarded as a kind of anthology, consisting of paraphrase, extensive quotation, brief biographical information, and, deliberately, a minimum of interpretative comment. Reichert thereby is able to compress into some 600 pages what would have been a multivolume anthology.

Reichert wants his people to speak for themselves and by and large they do. The book is in some respects exasperating because Reichert, who calls himself "something of an anarchist," wants his readers to share his enthusiasm and affection for his subjects, and he makes his wishes transparent. The factual information provided, although probably more reliable than in a standard history-as-errors-copied, is not as reliable as I would like it to be. More historical context would have been helpful; stylistically, the book needed an editor badly. Reichert also has some difficulty in dealing with advocacy of violence by anarchists; this is a topic that calls for (at least) the insights of a Camus. But the book is, for a merit, a non-"academic" book by an academically employed person (a political scientist).

THE VIRTUES of the book are these. Reichert has a conception of anarchism that allows him to see "individualism" and "communism" as specific emphases within a broader tradition. (By the 1930s this was the way many anarchists were seeing it.) He does not define what the broader tradition is—

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that would have been a different project. He seeks to exhibit it, and I think he succeeds. The breadth of his conception leads him to draw into the anarchist sphere some persons whom one would not expect there; but he has read Tom Paine (for example) and he draws out the anarchist themes in the writings of the great pariah. Reichert knows that the 19th-century individualist-anarchists were not "capitalist"-anarchists, and he has a sense for the individualism of the anarchist-communists. (Goldman's individualism is obvious but the tradition from which Sacco and Vanzetti came, although nominally anarchist-communist, had at its core a radical individualism.) He knows that there is a fundamental and ineradicable difference between anarchists and Marxists that has to do with the status of the individual, a difference that appears in, but goes far beyond, the question of abolition of the state.

Reichert also brings to attention such relatively unknown individuals as C. L. James, a very keen thinker of whom I was barely aware, and Moses Harmon; he reminds us of Clarence Darrow's Tolstoyan anarchism; he does particularly well by Voltairine de Cleyre. With the immigrant movements he tries his best, but the information was simply out of reach. For the period until the 1950s, where Reichert breaks off, he provides the patient reader with a picture, more exactly a mosaic picture, of American anarchism, in its intellectual aspects though not much with respect to its practice.

Reichert builds his mosaic guided by an interpretation of anarchism as authentic heir to Enlightenment philosophy, and this is a question that I am not sure about. (Of Goodman it was true.) Reichert fortifies this thesis by stressing the prominence of atheism in anarchist theories, so that "free thought," a strong American (and European) tradition, becomes the broader meaning of anarchism; for this reason he sees certain atheists, who were hardly anarchists in any specific sense, as precursors of anarchism.

Many anarchists have considered themselves "freethinkers." Anarchism is an attempt at demystification of politics and ideology, as heretical Christianity, skepticism, and atheism were attempts to demystify religion and theology. But I suspect that one would not be so inclined to an Enlightenment interpretation of anarchism if one conceived of it less as an intellectual (or, in Reichert's terms, an aesthetic) phenomenon, and more as a social phenomenon that continued, and built on, older ethical traditions; or if one laid as much stress on anarchist concern for social justice as on concern for liberty from the state. (Anarchism is deeds and not just words; to the latter Reichert has access, to the former not.) I have great difficulty in perceiving Ernst Cassirer as a 20th-century philosophical expression of the spirit from which anarchism derives. It may well be, I think it is, that Reichert sees something in his mosaic that I am unable to see, and this would also account for some judgments and appraisals that strike me as odd. He is entitled to his thesis, for the philosophical roots of anarchism are not clear. □

Patricia Cayo Sexton

World of Our Mothers

WE WERE THERE: THE STORY OF WORKING WOMEN IN AMERICA, by Barbara Mayer Wertheimer. New York: Pantheon Books. 427 pp. $15.95.

AMERICA'S WORKING WOMEN: A DOCUMENTARY HISTORY — 1600 TO THE PRESENT, compiled and edited by Rosalyn Baxandall, Linda Gordon, Susan Reverby. New York: Random House/Vintage Books. 408 pp. $6.95 (paper).

AMERICA'S IMMIGRANT WOMEN: THEIR CONTRIBUTION TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF A NATION FROM 1609 TO THE PRESENT, by Cecyle S. Neidle. New York: Hippocrene Books. 312 pp. $4.95 (paper).

AMERICAN WOMEN AND THE LABOR MOVEMENT, 1825-1974: AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY, by Martha Jane Soltow, Mary K. Wery. Metuchen, N. J.: Scarecrow Press. 247 pp. $7.95.

Because the vocabulary of work and of lineage is so masculine, we need to be constantly reminded that women have always been part of our "manpower resources" and that our foremothers, along with our forefathers, brought forth this new

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nation and have been keeping it going ever since. Most of them were "ordinary" women, distinguished in their own way, but not in ways most likely to catch the attention of traditional historians. Now at last they are being noticed, mainly by women writers, though they also figure prominently in such basic works as *World of Our Fathers*.

• Barbara Mayer Wertheimer's new book *We Were There*, a story of working women in America, offers us one lovingly assembled chronicle of their lives and their struggle to organize for equality and dignity. The book's scope covers the time span from the early colonial period to about 1914, though it contains some final notes on the newly organized Coalition of Labor Union Women. Its strength is in its coverage of women in the textile and apparel industries and in its attention to the activities of black women in the labor market.

The absorbing part of this chronicle is less in its record of the work women did than in their effort to organize and their relations with organized male workers. In the late 1820s, when employers sought to reduce the pay of millworkers, women and men together conducted "turnouts" or spontaneous and brief strikes of protest. The first recorded turnout in which women participated took place in 1824 in a Pawtucket, Rhode Island, mill. They walked out with the men but held their own separate meetings. The first strike conducted by women alone occurred not in New England mills, however, but in New York City, where in 1825 the United Tailoresses formed a union and demanded higher pay. The first mill strike took place in 1828 in Dover, New Hampshire, where hundreds of young women paraded with banners, shot off gunpowder to protest the company's efforts to fine tardy workers, to forbid talking on the job, discharge workers for undefined "debaucheries," require church attendance, and blacklist rule-breakers. (No wonder employers are said to be the ones who organize unions!) In Exeter, New Hampshire, women turned out in 1831 because employers were setting back the clocks to get extra work out of employees. In 1834 women struck in Lowell, Massachusetts, because employers sought to reduce their pay, and though the strike ended disastrously the women reorganized and, in 1836, struck again with greater force but even less success. The National Trades' Union, a loose and short-lived federation of local craft unions, voted moral support to the Lowell women but also passed resolutions opposing the employment of women in "injurious" millwork and supporting "protective" legislation. It also recommended, however, that unions take in women who were already employed and set up separate locals for them.

Following the depression of 1837, the Female Labor Reform Association, with Sarah Bagley at its head, was formed and joined with the New England Workingmen's Association to agitate for the ten-hour day and better conditions in the mills. These were among the earliest encounters of organized women with male unionists.

In 1881 the Knights of Labor, an open-door organization that took in unskilled and skilled alike, extended membership to women and by 1886, 192 women's assemblies had been organized and many formerly all-male assemblies had women members. For women, says Wertheimer,

> the Knights was nothing short of revolutionary. Its women's department received the support of the order's national officers, who tried to put it on a permanent footing, encouraged it to report at each general assembly, and made its director a general officer of the organization. This was often in sharp contrast to the attitude of the average Knight, who usually did not cooperate with the women's department very enthusiastically, if at all.

In 1886, the New Jersey Commissioner of Labor stated: "Since the girls have joined the Knights of Labor here they make the same wages as men." It would be many years, Wertheimer observes, before women found the same welcome in a labor organization.

Many of the craft unions in the American Federation of Labor, successor to the Knights, refused to admit women and few of them organized the unskilled jobs held by most women. From the founding at the AFL in 1886, however, women were technically eligible for membership, but women were excluded from apprenticeship programs leading to the skilled trades, and the extreme local autonomy in the AFL made it difficult for national leaders to prevent affiliates from discriminating against women.

Still, with Gompers's agreement, the National Women's Trade Union League was founded at the AFL convention of 1903 and it set out to persuade women to join unions and unions to accept them. Participants came mainly from the clothing industries but also included reform leaders and settlement-house workers.

"Gompers's support for the WTUL vacillated. He was impressed with the high social position of many of the allies, and his respect for status and

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wealth would override even his later hostility to the League, as long as socially prominent ally Margaret Dreier Robins was its president. When she resigned, his support waned.

The League favored legislation the AFL opposed, including national unemployment insurance, public labor exchanges, municipal grocery stores to cut out middlemen's profits. Gompers opposed such government activity. In 1909 the WTUL supported the idea of a labor party in opposition to the Gompers policy of rewarding friends and punishing enemies.

Following the 1912 strike of Lawrence textile workers, supported by the IWW, the AFL withheld its contribution to the League. Later the League reluctantly obeyed AFL orders to withdraw from the strike. After the strike, the AFL declared that WTUL women were "not qualified to organize," irreligious, and under IWW influence. The Lawrence strike, unlike the ill-fated Paterson strike (also IWW-led) was a smashing victory, not only for the women involved but for the idea of industrial unionism.

This book does not go all the way, no book can. It does not bring us into the contemporary work force or modern unionism. Today only a relatively small proportion of all working women are employed in textile and apparel manufacturing. Instead, most now work in the service sector and in clerical occupations; and women unionists in auto, communications, state-county, and teamsters far outnumber those in the older unions. Perhaps Barbara Wertheimer will write a sequel.

• Another new volume, *America's Working Women*, edited by Rosalyn Baxandall *et al.*, covers much the same historic period and material (from 1600 to the present), but it presents a compilation of original documents rather than a narrative history, and its perspective is that of women whose feminism "was an outgrowth of our participation in the civil rights and New Left movements." In their view, "the abolition of capitalism in itself does not guarantee, as history has shown, total human liberation. A socialist feminist revolution can produce this fundamental change, and in such a revolution working-class women must play a central role."

The story is told by participants of the day. Many of these articles are fascinating in their authenticity, but some others are rather too cryptic and too loosely tied together, and many topics of import are almost ignored. The WTUL, for instance, is covered in two pages and these make only the most condemnatory comments about the AFL. Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, on the other hand, is given six pages and gay workers three.

• A third book, *America's Immigrant Women*, by Cecyle S. Neidle, describes the immigrants' "contribution to the development of a nation from 1609 to the present." This volume contains lengthy sections on immigrant workers, early women unionists, the WTLU, the apparel unions and Emma Goldman, and its opening chapters cover the same historic ground as do those of Wertheimer and Baxandall *et al.* Too much of this volume is given over, however, to biographies of those immigrants who "made it" in science, medicine, music, art, business.

• A final newly published volume, *American Women and the Labor Movement, 1825-1974*, by Martha Jane Soltow and Mary K. Wery, offers a fine annotated bibliography on the subject. Topics include employment, trade unions, working conditions, strikes, legislation, worker education, labor leaders, and supportive efforts such as NWTUL and CLUW. So voluminous is this material, and the documents yet untapped, that the unmet challenge is to synthesize it and disclose its hidden meanings. Events and accounts are one thing, the meaning of history is quite another. The challenge left us by our foremothers is to discover patterns of meanings in their lives and to *comprehend*, through analysis and synthesis, what events *say* to them and to us. Chronicles and collections cannot do this job.

• What is most encouraging in the new literature on working women (including Barbara Garson's *All the Livelong Day*, Nancy Seifer's *Nobody Speaks for Me*, Lillian Rubin's *Worlds of Pain*, Louise Howe's *Pink Collar Workers*) is that many feminist writers have an enlightened and balanced view of labor unions. Most of them vigorously agree that women need to organize and affiliate with established unions. The fact that male workers and unionists have often had an ambivalent attitude about the competition of low-wage women workers does not cause them to despair of unionism. I find them in general far more actively prolabor than their male counterparts on the left, and at the moment far more interested in working-class women than male writers are in the male working-class. It is the most encouraging sign on the feminist scene, and if women can avoid devouring each other in factional and ideological struggles, we may get somewhere. □

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Judith B. Walzer

The Badness of "Julia"

This is a bad movie. Surprisingly so, since it had a naturally sympathetic subject on which there is likely to be universal agreement in feeling. The reviewers haven't let on to its failure, perhaps they didn't notice. Its badness is the kind they may have become inured to, typical of a style and attitude in contemporary films. It combines political thoughtlessness with aesthetic pretentiousness. The movie is sloppy about the history it deals with and, as if to compensate, relies on visual details for their own sake.

The story is a modest one. Lily, a writer growing old, remembers a brave friend of her youth, the brilliant Julia who became involved in the struggles against Nazism and finally died as an active member of the underground. Lily sees her once in Vienna after she has been beaten up in the February days of 1934. A few years later in Paris, the writer agrees to carry $50,000 for Julia and her comrades to Berlin in order to ransom prisoners. She does this successfully, sees Julia briefly in Berlin, and soon after retrieves her friend's ashes from London after she has been fatally wounded.

A story straightforward in meaning. Julia is a heroine; she gives her life. Lily is courageous in her own small way. They are true to one another, as good friends are, and true to the struggle they, and we, believed in. No story was ever hurt by such simplicity, especially when varied enough to keep us attentive.

Some recent foreign films on World War II, without blurring accepted notions about rights and wrongs, have risked a greater complexity of characterization, *Lacombe, Lucien and Les Violons du Bal* for example. *Julia*'s creators had an easier task before them—a plain antifascist story of heroism in a desperate time. Instead of accepting the story in its integrity they slide away from it as if it had no meaning for them. *Julia* is parasitic on our moral and political conventions without ever making honest use of them. It assumes our feelings about the political conflict without ever embodying them and making them real. The story disintegrates into bewildering episodes, the occasions into odd, disconnected moments representing nothing but themselves. All of Europe in crisis is made to seem full of strange overcoated creatures who give Lily mysterious directions in the manner of amateurish spy flicks. Otherwise the scene is people with silly Americans drinking themselves from one hotel to another en route to a theater festival in Moscow, without seeming in the slightest aware of what's going on. Not that it couldn't happen and probably did, but who were those people, what were they doing and what on earth is going on?

That a rich, beautiful, and gifted American heiress studying medicine in Vienna should be converted to socialism and then deeply commit herself to the antifascist work of the underground seems real enough. No wonder her writer friend might want to use her story to remember the experience of a generation. But the moviemakers saw only the most superficial of those possibilities. The movie they created constitutes the worst kind of political "name-dropping"—just mention the event, we "know" what to think of it. Where it might have been rich with the details of a common historical memory, the movie uses those references cheaply, gliding over and ignoring their specificity, and ends in denying their importance out of sheer thoughtlessness.

Now Hellman's essay "Julia" from *Pentimento* cannot be blamed for the movie, although in itself it is a slight piece, with some of the careless politics

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the author's essays often have. At least here Hellman's identification with the "good cause" is not only that; her memories are full of a sense of the times, the shudders of a real fear, and the sorrow of remembering what happened to a friend. In *Scoundrel Time* she denies political complexity in an effort to make us feel there was only one simple truth at stake—her own—but here she is far less disingenuous. She pretends to no profound analysis of history, what counts is the love for a wonderful friend.

The essay is engaging whatever its flaws. Through it the still angry old woman remembers the fiery humors of her youth. ("She's "scrappy" as Hammett quips, "the neighborhood bulldog.") Her rhetoric achieves its effects by the sharp, somewhat unexpected turns of feeling at the ends of indefatigably plain straight sentences. It's a sentimental effect overall, tough but sentimental, and she's a master of it, much as Hemingway from whom she probably learned the technique was: the tougher she gets, the more we are assured of the heart of gold within.

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IF IT WAS a thin story that *Julia* offered them, the screenwriters made no attempt to invent, to fill in between the lines. There's more tension in Hellman's short essay than in all the endless, wandering film. For what seems like hours, there's no dialogue and when there is, it's rudimentary, laughably so, at moments that scarcely need comedy. What good lines there are come directly from the essay (like Lily saying "hello" frantically to her contact at the railroad station because it's their password) or from some other Hellman writings (like the scene in which Hammett tells her all the things she could be instead of a writer). The screenwriter thinks he can get an effect of tension and suspense without any lines, just by showing what happened. But so little does happen and most of it is so confused and vague, that the viewer ends up being asked for sympathy based on nice meandering photography and a few allusions to a good cause.

The movie is spoiled by an artificial sense of the visual that current filmmakers have cultivated beyond all measure and common sense. On this view the beauty of what we see—the motion, connection, and juxtaposition of images—displaces a sense of the story. What people do and say to make a lively and interesting imitation of reality is forgotten as if it were completely unimportant. One ought to realize, I guess, in the early parts of the movie as the camera fixedly follows the movement of a Rolls down a road through beautiful, dark woods entranced with its angle of vision above the little figure on the hood of the car, that nothing of much substance will follow. Only pretty pictures.

There is beautiful photography in *Julia*, but it is only that. And beauty distorted by lack of sense and significance is inevitably cheapened. The woods around the grandparents' estate, trains steaming eastward in Europe through the snow and pine forests, some formidable glimpses of locomotives pulling into vast 19-century railroad stations, are all without a meaningful connection to something that is being said.

The most unfortunate result of this total concentration on pictorialization is what happens to the characters. Only Hammett—Jason Robards, Jr.—manages to sustain an impression, and that's probably because of the association with all the other characters he's played, that grizzled look and gravelly voice helped by a few good scenes he shares with Fonda and easily commands; he has most of the good lines in the movie. Even the ethereal Vanessa Redgrave (who doesn't look like anybody else) can't manage to make Julia more than a presence. Jane Fonda tries hard, but she is deserted by the script before she has a chance. We "root" for Fonda—at least those of us who remember the original of that square-jawed, open, straight-toothed American face of hers and that no-nonsense style of acting. She might have made an excellent Sancho Panza for Redgrave's Don Quixote, but with that script it was impossible.

This might have been a movie to set out on an exploration of a youthful friendship between two women. Perhaps Redgrave and Fonda were drawn to it for that reason. We have, over the years, fairly drowned in idealizations of the male version of this friendship that our culture has specialized in since David and Jonathan. But the movie makes the worst hash of this possibility. Lily being drawn to her friend, worshipping her, a hug and "I love you, Julia"—that's about all we get.

There's no way to prove that the poor political content of the film is intrinsically connected to all its artistic weaknesses, but one can't help but feel it all along. The same unwillingness to be inventive, to put one's cards on the table, to speak out, is evident in all aspects of the work. The easy assumption that we all know what to think, it doesn't have to be spoken or presented, betrays our common opinion just as the elegant and expensive slickness falsifies what we should be seeing. □

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LETTERS

On Eurocommunism

Editors:

Never-being-tired-with-being-always-duped: now this seems to me a fair, even though not very courteous summary of the long history of attitudes a significant part of the Western left kept displaying for several decades in face of Communism. Every few years a new source of joyful expectations. Popular Front: now they really change! Ideological relaxation during the war: they cannot retreat! China: a new, truly popular Conmunism, freedom, a hundred flowers! Cuba: a fresh, genuine form of Communist democracy! Khrushchev: de-Stalinization, liberalization, at last! Brezhnev: technocrats come, they cannot afford to keep the old system! Or perhaps Vietnam—a new, national Communism? (Cambodia? No, to be fair, one does not see many enthusiasts of liberated Cambodia, where the liberators within a year or so managed to massacre approximately the same percentage of their own population as the German Nazis did in over five years in occupied Poland.)

I am far from saying that all these and many other events left Communism untouched or that Communism is exactly what it was 60 years ago (that is the objection of Mr. Pachter who seems to deplore the fact that I know Communism from books; I am happy to leave him with his Besserwisser's satisfaction). Nor do I believe that because of so many failures and of so many pathetic disappointments of well-wishers this new phenomenon under scrutiny—"Eurocommunism"—is bound to be as disappointing as all the hopes of old; indeed, I said clearly [in my article in the Winter 1978 Symposium on Eurocommunism] that it might (admittedly, might, not necessarily will) develop into social-democratic form. What the foregoing experience recommends is cautiousness in assessing the meaning of the new phenomenon and this hardly seems to me extravagant advice.

I perfectly agree with Mr. Coser that if we observe in Communism more respect for the democratic values we should welcome this change, rather than deplore it. This, however, is not the matter of the discussion; what matters is *what* we really observe.

And I am far from suggesting, as Mr. Pachter does, that "Eurocommunism" is to be considered a new version of Stalin's Popular Front in the late '30s; the latter was a tactical device at the service of Soviet foreign policy and Eurocommunism is certainly not a Moscow contrivance. To say that is, however, only the beginning of an assessment.

Yet Mr. Coser's opinion is that to demand the Eurocommunists be less elusive in explaining their attitudes toward Soviet Communism is to assume the position of a "Stalinist, fascist, McCarthyist inquisitor." I am not going to repeat what I said in the article, which aroused Mr. Coser's indignation, advisable though it might be given his manner of summing up my position (just an example: I wrote "There is little reason to deny that these people [*viz.* Italian Communist leaders] mean what they say"; Mr. Coser's summary: "Kolakowski avers that one cannot believe what their [*viz.* Italian Communists'] leaders say." I charitably forbear from commenting). My point is rather unsophisticated. The Communist parties for decades identified themselves completely, clearly and without any restrictions whatever, with a social system based (admittedly, in fact, not in ideology) on slave labor, mass terror, supression of all representative institutions, and universal mendaciousness, a system that in terms of democratic liberties and human rights had for years a position second to none (from the bottom, that is). Now comes Mr. Kanapa (or another party functionary) to say to us (quoted from memory, yet, I trust, without distortion in content): We French Communists defend, of course, democracy, pluralism, and human rights, as we have always done. What a joy, what a conversion! If I ask him for more explanation I am not only guilty of an utmost tactlessness but I prove, according to Mr. Coser, that I have turned into a fascist, Stalinist, McCarthyist inquisitor.

The Soviet connection is not and has never been an accidental indisposition of Communist parties. It used to be their source of life and of wisdom. It is obviously the case that a tendency to free oneself from Soviet control does not need to be associated with the desire to acquire libertarian habits; Chinese Communism has always been, if anything, more totalitarian than the Russian one, and among Soviet dependencies in Eastern Europe Romania, with its modest "de-Sovietization," has probably the most oppressive internal regime. And so, to have shed the Soviet yoke amounts by no means to having procured democratic credentials. But to be within the Soviet political orbit means certainly not to have procured them. This is not at all the matter of ideological verbiage, which, after all, has always been in Communism full of democratic phrases (Lenin might have dismissed and derided the words "democracy," "freedom," and the like, but Stalin never did; neither did Togliatti or Thorez). This is the matter of real political objectives and of reasons why we should think that these objectives have really changed.

To take an example: the idea of dictatorship of the proletariat was not just an element among others in the Communist credo; it was, since Lenin, its core, its essence, its spine, its basis and its crown, its spirit and its body, the true definition of what Communism was as opposed to Social Democratic traitors. Now we see the French Communist party voting to abolish this idea. The vote is unanimous, no discussion, no opposition, no doubts. The cornerstone of Communism was over night thrown into the dustbin and everybody was happy. Unanimously. That is what we call de-Stalinization of a Communist party.

I should admit, though, that Mr. Coser has one argument to prove that it would be "pure fantasy" to expect that the Italian Communists could "return to a Leninist vanguard politics." This is impossible, he argues, because "it is a huge mass protest party, rooted in both

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urban and rural areas of Italy," because "it is a huge electoral apparatus, a highly organized machinery geared to bring in the votes," and because the voters do not have much knowledge of the doctrine but they "wish for change," being disgusted with the corruption, the disorder, etc. of the Italian society. The description is perfectly accurate, but the conclusion is an astonishing non sequitur. Mr. Coser does not seem to notice that all these characteristics fit equally well both the Italian Fascist party and the Nazi party in the '20s. I do not say, suggest, or believe, that Italian Communists are fascists or that the situation in Italy is exactly what it was 55 years ago. I simply believe that all the characteristics Mr. Coser cites in order to show the democratic nature of Italian Communism can be applied to virtually all the dynamic mass movements, including fascist ones. It is utterly incredible that a mass movement of people who press for change in a society with a high level of corruption and inefficiency is bound to be democratic, all the examples show that more of "pure fantasy" is on the side of those who cherish such hopes. All the revolutions of our century, leftist or rightist, occurred in conditions as described above and none of them produced impressive results in terms of democracy: this applies to Russia, Italy, Germany, China, and Cuba (in chronological order). All historical experience proves exactly the opposite of what Mr. Coser, unbelievably enough, seems to infer. Is it possible that right now, in Italy (or elsewhere) comparable conditions will yield entirely different results? Perhaps. An argument (or better two) to support this hope would be useful.

Does Mr. Coser seriously believe that because the masses of voters do not know, and do not care about, the ideology of the party they support, they are better prepared to defend democratic institutions if threatened by this very party? One historical example, please, or one common-sense argument in favor of this strange belief.

To end, I should thank Mr. Coser for having kindly referred to the parable of the Jester I once had produced. With due respect I think it proper to remember that—in my intention, at least—a Jester's main characteristic was skepticism, rather than uncritical wishful thinking.

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Last November I participated in the Venice Biennale and had the opportunity to listen to an exposé of Mr. Ellenstein who enjoyed the reputation of being one of the leading ideologists of Eurocommunism. After having peremptorily stated that he would never slide into anti-Sovietism (in fact, it had occured to nobody to accuse him of such a monstrosity) he went on to explain some less pleasant sides of Communism in power. After all, he argued (again, I sum it up from memory: fairly, I believe), capitalism was developing for 300 years, and it had committed a number of appalling crimes before it built democratic institutions; why should one expect a new social system to be perfect from the very beginning? I quote this grotesque fallacy, because you can hear it quite frequently from Communists of various confessions. Indeed, once we have a new social system, it is entitled, by the very fact of being new, to do away with all the civil liberties and guarantees for human rights mankind (or rather a part of it) achieved after centuries of struggles and to establish a totalitarian reign of terror and lies. One wonders what was wrong with Nazism, which was doubtless a new social system. The general message I can gather from this sort of exculpations is: "Just wait in concentration camps for 300 years, ladies and gentlemen, and then you will see truly splendid things!" I am not sure about the age of Mr. Coser; as to myself, I feel slightly too old to enjoy this prospect.

LESZEK KOLAKOWSKI
Oxford □

"All That Is Solid Melts into Air" . . .

Editors:

The phrase, "All that is solid melts into air," which Marshall Berman uses as a touchstone of Marx's modernity (*Dissent*, Winter 1978), is not original with Marx but an allusion to *The Tempest*, very close to being a quotation. After the masque in Act IV, which has celebrated the bethrothal of Ferdinand and Miranda, Prospero, who is about to renounce his powers of enchantment, makes the speech that contains these lines:

> These our actors,
> As I foretold you, were all spirits, and
> Are melted into air, into thin air:
> And, like the baseless fabric of this vision,
> The cloud-capp'd towers, the gorgeous palaces,
> The solemn temples, the great globe itself,
> Yea, all which it inherit, shall dissolve,
> And, like this insubstantial pageant faded,
> Leave not a rack behind. We are such stuff
> As dreams are made on, and our little life
> Is rounded with a sleep.

One meaning of the allusion is that history is a play in which all men have been forced to adopt illusory parts. With the coming of the bourgeoisie, and of the class war, they will see themselves for the first time as they really are. "All that is holy is profaned, and men at last are forced to face the real conditions of the their lives and their relations with their fellow men." Of course, the allusion is only one of many in which Marx looks on all history as a partly deceptive performance of tragedy or farce. How much it was intended to evoke of other elements in *The Tempest*—the "relations of production" between Prospero and his servants, Ariel and Caliban; the age of discovery in which the play is set; the sense of what is truly human, which only Ariel can teach Prospero—readers of Marx and Shakespeare can decide for themselves.

None of this weakens Mr. Berman's argument. It strengthens it in a new and perhaps unexpected direction.

D.L. ABRAMOVITCH
Haddam, Conn. □

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A Public Service Message from the American Income Life Insurance Company—Executive Offices, Waco, Texas—Bernard Rapoport, Chairman of the Board.

Progress

By Bernard Rapoport

In the period from 1899 to 1953—a span of 54 years—the ratio of Capital to Labor increased over 100 percent. You know what that means, of course, that more money is spent on machinery than on labor. If you have any doubt about why those of you in the labor force need to be darned concerned about whether you have a job next year or years to come, these figures certainly give credence to those concerns. The ratio of Capital to Labor is increasing at an even greater accelerated rate today than in the fifty-four-year period I just mentioned.

The standard clichés don't wash with the facts. For example, the economic system is supposed to be self-adjusting; if everything worked by the book, then when capital became too expensive entrepreneurs could be expected to reduce the rate of capital consumption in favor of labor. The reality is that the intensive use of capital continues unabatedly and the so-called compensatory mechanisms that may have been effective in the past don't work very well today.

Everyone knows that the paper industry is a low-profit, highly mechanized industry—the leaders of the industry thought that they could decrease costs with more sophisticated machinery and reduce their labor costs.

If we had had in place of an investment tax credit a tax break that hinged on maintenance of jobs by a company, we would have prevented two bad things form happening: first, loss of employment, and, second, loss of profits for the company.

The illusion has always been that when you start a new factory you create jobs; this, of course, is true, but what we do not take into account is how many jobs will be displaced by virtue of what the factory will be producing. I am aware that in my own company we would need from 2½ to 3 times as many employees more if it were not for the computer. I am certainly not advocating the abolition of computers but I do think we need to consider that while the manufacturing of computers created a lot of jobs, without any basis in fact I suspect that it displaced people on a ratio of fifteen or twenty to one.

It seems to me that unions need to become more deeply involved in these kinds of considerations.

Consider, for a moment, the problem of that so many of the unemployed are within the most deprived group of our population. These are the folks who find it must difficult to find jobs. What has been our answer to their concerns? Self-service gasoline stations? This action has displaced thousands of folks—so many more jobs than were created by those in the manufacture of the equipment needed for self-service gasoline stations.

In human terms, so-called technological progress always seems to inflict its severest blows at that element that needs nurturing most.

When you dissect, piece by piece, what it is that we in our government are doing to ourselves, it does have, as it should, a numbing effect. We ought to almost be embarrassed to look in the mirror and realize that as citizens we put up with these inordinate and unnecessary inflictions.

If we start with what is best for most people, that's the first step. We can do it. As one Indian philosopher said: BELIEVING MAY BE DIFFICULT, THE NEED FOR BELIEVING IS INESCAPABLE.

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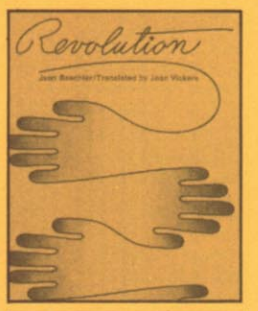

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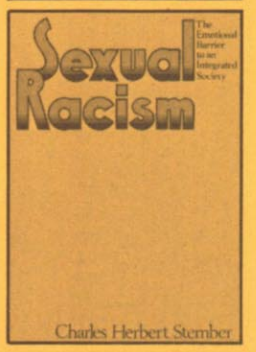

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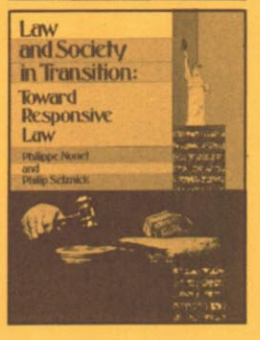

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